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BOMBAY BRANCH

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THE

WORKS,

Literary IN *Society*

VERSE AND PROSE,

OF

WILLIAM SHENSTONE, Esq;

VOL. III.

CONTAINING

LETTERS to particular FRIENDS, from the Year 1739 to 1763.

THE SECOND EDITION.

LONDON,
Printed for J. DODSLEY, in Pall-mall.
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PREFACE.

THOUGH the Character of Mr. SHENSTONE is too well known, and his Reputation as a Writer too firmly eſtabliſhed, to require any further commendation, yet it may perhaps be expected that ſome apology ſhould be made for this Additional Volume of his Works, containing Familiar Letters to ſome of his moſt intimate Friends.

To thoſe who may think ſuch an apology requiſite, it might be ſufficient to ſay, that the reception which the former Volumes have met with, affords the ſtrongeſt reaſon to believe that an addition to them would be very acceptable to the Public; and that the Author's talent in *epiſtolary* writing appears not to have been inferior to that which diſtinguiſhes his other compoſitions.

But it may be objected, that, whatever their merit may be, *Letters*, not intended for the Public, ought not to be publiſhed; and that an act of this kind is a violation of Private Friendſhip.

This objection, it muſt be confeſſed, carries with it ſuch an air of delicacy, that the perſons here concerned are very willing to give it all due attention. At the ſame time they cannot but obſerve, that it will not hold in all caſes, and therefore muſt unavoidably be ſubject to ſome limitations—that theſe limitations muſt vary, as the circumſtances of caſes happen to vary—and that not to make proper allowances for ſuch circumſtances is highly unreaſonable—injurious to many who have deſerved well of the Public by this very conduct, and detrimental to the intereſts of Literature. It might perhaps be difficult, and is by no means neceſſary, to enumerate theſe ſeveral limitations. It will be ſufficient in this place to ſay, that where neither the repu-

tation

tation of the Writer, nor that of any other perſon, is injured, there the force of the objection evidently ceaſes. And it is not only believed, on the moſt mature deliberation, that this is the caſe in the preſent inſtance; but moreover that there are poſitive good reaſons in its favour, reſpecting as well the Writer's character in this *ſpecies* of compoſition, as the ſatisfaction and entertainment of the Reader.

THE encouragement which has been uſually given to Works of this nature might ſeem to make theſe obſervations unneceſſary! But it was not thought ſufficient barely to ſhelter this publication under the ſanction of ſuch an authority; as it is well known that the wantonneſs of curioſity has ſometimes encouraged deſigns by no means juſtifiable: and it is as readily acknowledged that the following Letters are deficient in many particulars requiſite to excite that curioſity, being neither written on popular ſubjects, nor addreſſed to perſons of rank

and eminence in the world. They will not fail however to afford an agreeable entertainment to ſuch as can reliſh an animated diſplay of the various efforts of a fine Imagination for a length of years, whether amuſing itſelf with rural embelliſhments, or occupied in other pleaſures of learned retirement, and a warm diſintereſted friendſhip. Such are the ſubjects of the following Letters! and if any perſon ſhould ſtill retain a doubt concerning the propriety of perpetuating them in this manner, he ſhall be finally referred to the Writer's own authority, who, in a letter dated October 23, 1754, thus expreſſes himſelf:

"I CONFESS to you that I am conſidera-
"bly mortified by Mr. W—'s conduct in
"regard to thoſe Letters (meaning his own
"letters to that gentleman's brother); and,
"rather than they ſhould have been ſo un-
"neceſſarily deſtroyed, would have given
"more money than it is allowable for me
"to mention with decency. I look upon

"my

" my Letters as ſome of my *chef-d'œuvres*;
" and could I be ſuppoſed to have the ſmal-
" leſt pretenſions to propriety of ſtyle or ſen-
" timent, I ſhould imagine it muſt appear
" principally in my Letters to his brother,
" and one or two more friends. I conſider
" them as the records of a friendſhip that
" will be always dear to me, and as the
" hiſtory of my mind for theſe twenty years
" paſt."

When it is conſidered how ſeldom ſo valuable a collection of real correſpondence is to be met with, and how difficult it is to ſupply the want of it by a fictitious one, it cannot be doubted that the Public will be pleaſed to ſee the loſs here complained of ſo well repaired, and to be furniſhed with ſuch genuine examples of the Author's ſtyle and ſentiments, together with an authentic hiſtory of his mind, for ſo long a ſpace of time.

To conclude: The talents of this Author, on whatever ſubject they were exerciſed,

were ſo uncommon, and the fame of his little *Ferme ornée*, under the conduct of a taſte entirely original, was become ſo conſiderable, that every ſpecimen of the one, and every anecdote relative to the improvement of the other, ſeemed too intereſting to be buried in oblivion: at leaſt, they were thought ſo by thoſe to whom the *greater* part of this Collection is addreſſed:—perſons indeed confeſſedly partial to the Writer's talents, and intereſted in his commendations; but at the ſame time perſons neither ſo regardleſs of their Friend's reputation, nor their own, as to have hazarded either, without the ſtrongeſt perſuaſion that their partiality had not impoſed upon their judgement; and that it was no indecent oſtentation in them, by this public act, to teſtify, that they eſteemed it not only a peculiar felicity in their fortunes, but likewiſe ſome degree of credit, to have enjoyed the pleaſures of ſuch a Friendſhip throughout ſo conſiderable a period of human life.

MR.

MR. SHENSTONE'S

LETTERS.

I. To Mr. JAGO, with a Song, and the Author's Sentiments on Muſical Compoſition.

Dear Sir, 1739.

AS my head is conſiderably more confuſed than uſual, by reaſon of a bad cold, I ſhall aim no higher in this letter than at bare *recitative*, reſerving all my *airs* for a ſeaſon when my mind is more in *tune*. Such, I hope, will be the time which you ſet apart to attend the *chief muſician*, at Birmingham. I thorough-

ly design to lend an *ear* to *his* performance, on condition he will not refuse one to a proposal I intend to make, of having, one day or other, a merry strain at The Leasowes. But if you have any *penchant* to see the face of your humble servant at Birmingham, your next effectual way will be to inform him when these solemn nuptials betwixt Tweedle-dum and Tweedle-dee are to be consummated. I will, *certes*, not be absent at the throwing of the stocking, any more than Parson Evans in Shakespear would be "absence at the grace." I have sent a song, not that I am sure I have not sent it before; but that, if you can see any joke that it containeth, the fore-mentioned gentleman may be asked to translate it into music. When I use this expression, you will, peradventure, look upon it as my opinion, that in musical compositions sound ought as much to answer sense as one language does another, insomuch, that such and such thoughts ought to bring into our heads such and such sounds, and *vice versa*. But in case there is no sense, and no thought, the more languages a sentence is translated into, the more 'tis exposed. And in case it be the misfortune of my little piece to have neither, I beg that Mr. Marriett may not inform anybody what it signifies in music. As a farther proof of the confused state of my intellects, you see, almost at the end of my letter, my thanks for the packet, &c. which ought to have been placed in the very front of it, in order to express, in some degree, the sense

ſenſe I have of your favours. I long to ſee you; and am, dear Sir,

Your moſt obedient

and faithful ſervant,

W. SHENSTONE.

SONG.

" When bright Ophelia treads the green
" In all the pride of dreſs and mien;
" Averſe to freedom, mirth, and play,
" The lofty rival of the day;
" Methinks to my enchanted eye,
" The lilies droop, the roſes die.

" But when, diſdaining art, the fair
" Aſſumes a ſoft, engaging air:
" Mild as the opening morn of May,
" And as the feather'd warblers gay:
" The ſcene improves where'er ſhe goes,
" More ſweetly ſmiles the pink and roſe.

" O lovely maid! propitious hear,
" Nor think thy Damon inſincere.
" Pity my wild deluſive flame:
" For tho' the flowers are ſtill the ſame,
" To me they languiſh, or improve,
" And plainly tell me that I love."

II. To the ſame, in the Manner of PAMELA.

1739.

WELL! and ſo I ſat me down in my room, and was reading *Pamela*——one might furniſh this book with ſeveral pretty decorations, thought I to myſelf; and then I began to deſign cuts for it, in particular places. For inſtance, one, where Pamela is forced to fall upon her knees in the arbor: a ſecond, where ſhe is in bed, and Mrs. Jewkes holds one hand, and Mr. B. the other: a third, where Pamela ſits ſewing in the ſummer-houſe, &c. So I juſt ſketched them out, and ſent my little hints, ſuch as they were, to Mr. R——n. As ſoon as I had ſealed my letter, in comes Mrs. Arnold [a]—"Well, Mrs. "Arnold, ſays I, this Mr. Jago never comes—what "can one do? I'm as dull as a beetle for want of "company." "Sir, ſays ſhe, the hen—" "What "makes you out of breath? ſays I, Mrs. Arnold; "what's the matter?" "Why, Sir, ſays ſhe, the "hen that I ſet laſt-ſabbath-day-was-three-weeks has "juſt hatched, and has brought all her eggs to "good." "That's brave indeed, ſays I." "Ay, that "it is, ſays ſhe, ſo be and't pleaſe G—d an how that "they liven, there'll be a glorious parcel of 'em.

[a] His houſe-keeper, of whom very reſpectful mention is made in the courſe of this correſpondence.

"Shall

"Shall I bring 'em up for you to ſee?" ſays ſhe. "No, thank ye, Mrs. Arnold, ſays I; but aren't "ye in ſome apprehenſions from the kite, Mrs. "Arnold?"—"No, Sir, ſays ſhe, I hope there's no "danger; I *takes* pretty good care of 'em." "I "don't queſtion your care, ſays I; for you're ſeldom "without a duck or a chicken about you."—"Poor "pretty *creters!* ſays ſhe; look here, Maſter, this has "gotten a ſpeck of black upon her tail."—"Ay, "I thought you wern't without one about you, ſays "I—I don't think, ſays I, Mrs. Arnold, but your "ſoul was deſign'd for a hen, originally." "Why, "and if I *had* been a hen, ſays ſhe, I believe I ſhould "have done as much for my chickens as yonder "great black-and-white hen does, tho' I ſay't that "ſhou'd not ſay't, ſaid ſhe." Aye, that you would, thought I. "Well, but now when Mr. Jago comes, "have you got e'er a chicken that's *fit to kill?*" "No, ſays ſhe, I doubt there is ne'er-a-one." "Well, ſays I, Mrs. Arnold, you and your chicken "may go down; I am going to write a letter." So I ſat down, and wrote thus far: ſcrattle, ſcrattle, goes the pen—why how now? ſays I—what's the matter with the pen? So I thought I would make an end of my letter, becauſe my pen went ſcrattle, ſcrattle. Well, I warrant I ſhall have little pleaſure when Mr. Jago *comes*; for I never fixed my heart much upon any thing in my life, but ſome misfortune happened to balance my pleaſure.—After all,

thought I, it must be some very ill accident that outweighs the pleasure I shall take in seeing him.

Leasowes, July 22. W. SHENSTONE.

III. To a Friend, too ceremoniously declining to purchase a Horse for him.

SIR, 1739.

I CANNOT avoid imagining the first part of your letter was mere raillery. I am sure it gave me a good deal of pleasure (for I can bear very well to hear my foibles exposed, though not my faults), and on that account must needs make grateful mention of it. I acknowledge the oddness of the letter which occasioned it, and could not expect that such an ill-formed application could have produced an answer so very oratorical. In the first place, you lay open the subject, or indeed, what you call the offices in which I am pleased to employ you. In the next, you alledge your own inability to enter upon matters of such great concernment. That this is rhetorical, nay, pure rhetoric, I gather from the exordiums of all the declamations that I ever heard in my life. 'Tis, moreover, not uncommon with declaimers to give some reasons why they should not absolutely decline the subject, though they are sen-

sible

ſible of their inſufficiency (otherwiſe they might be expected to ſit down, and hold their tongues). And this is what you have done, by ſaying that you are unwilling to diſſent from the world in regard to the ſubjects you are engaged in; that you, therefore, choſe to ſteer a middle courſe, by that means avoiding the imputation of preſumption on the one hand, and indifference on the other. When this is done, you enter gravely upon the ſubject, and, to give it a greater perſpicuity, divide it into two parts. The firſt part happens to be "concerning the purchaſe of "*an* horſe." On this occaſion, you inform me, that I am in a good country for horſes; and ſecondly, that I have a number of acquaintance round about me, who are very well ſkilled in the nature of them. Now each of theſe informations ſeems, at firſt ſight, to mean no more than what I have better opportunities of knowing than the perſon who informs me, and, on this account, to err in point of ſuperfluity. But, upon ſecond thoughts, they have *this force* (to ſpeak like a grammarian); namely, that I am entirely negligent of my own affairs; and, ſecondly, that I care not whom I give trouble to, if I can but avoid it myſelf; ſo that the ſentences have really a beauty, when one ſearches beneath their ſuperficies. After you have ſaid this and more, which includes all that can be ſaid upon the ſubject, you deſcend to the ſecond diviſion, in relation to which I am too grateful to be otherwiſe than *ſerious* in my acknowledgements.

I HAD not expatiated thus far, but to ſhew that I am not inſenſible of a favour; nor ſhould I expatiate any farther, but to prove that I am equally ſenſible of a favour.

I DESIRE you would believe, that I abſolutely aſſent to your critique: That ſome of your ſentiments were my own before I communicated the verſes; and others, as ſoon as you had favoured me with the diſcovery of them: That I would, *per præſentes*, return my thanks for them; which you might juſtly have claimed, whether I had approved them or not. One exception to this approbation my modeſty bids me mention, on account of your too great partiality in my favour. My gratitude you are entitled to without exception or limitation.

IT will, perhaps, gratify your curioſity to know, that Mr. G. has a copy of verſes in the laſt magazine, entitled, "The little Cur." There are ſeveral ſtrokes that are picturesque and humourous; I believe it was done in haſte. The motto is exquiſite, and much more properly applied by Mr. G. than the Emperor Adrian, in my opinion, notwithſtanding all that Pope ſays. Tell me your judgement of Mr. L.——n's in the ſame paper. The epigram "To —— one who refuſed to walk in the Park, &c." is a good one.

I HAVE waved ſending the verſes to Mr. Somervile at preſent, becauſe I hope to ſee you ſoon either at The Leaſowes or at Birmingham. I cannot tell whether I ſhall have time to incloſe in this letter my ballad. If I do, conſider it only as ſome words that I chuſe to make uſe of to ſome notes of which I am more than ordinarily fond [b] It is as much deſigned for my own ſinging (in private I mean) as ever was a bottle of cherry-brandy for an old woman's drinking. Now I think of it, I really believe that I every day approach nearer and nearer to the capacity, the way, the inſignificancy, of an old woman. Mrs. Arnold has certainly, by her *charms*, her incantations, and her converſations together, contributed a good deal to this transformation. Pray come over if you can, and try to reinſtate me in my right mind, in proportion to the ſoundneſs of which I ſhall be more and more

Your friend and ſervant,

W. S.

[b] The tune "Come, and liſten to my ditty, &c." The words founded upon a true hiſtory of Queen Elizabeth, who, looking from a caſtle wherein ſhe was a priſoner, and ſeeing a country milk-maid ſinging, expreſſed great envy at the girl's condition, and diſſatisfaction with regard to her own.

IV. To

IV. To the same, from Town.

Dear Sir, 1739.

I RETURN you my thanks, moſt heartily, for the poetical reſentment which you have ſhewn againſt my cenſurers, the Riddle-maſters. I have ſent Mr. Somervile's verſes and yours to Cave; though I am aſhamed to own I neglected it ſo long, that, I fear, he will have no room for them this month. If you can extirpate falſe wit in a manner, you will do no ſmall ſervice to the true: you do no ſmall *honour* to it, whether you extirpate the other or not.

You have heard of the motion; have heard, probably, all that I can tell you of it: That it was ill-concerted; that it has done the oppoſition great diſſervice; that the King is now confirmed in the opinion of Sir Robert's honeſty; that the younger Mr. Pitt's ſpeech was the moſt admired on the oppoſite ſide, and Sir R—t's on the court ſide; that they did not leave the Houſe till five in the morning; that Sir R—t and P—y are ſo violent, that the Sp——r is continually calling them to order; finally, that the affair has occaſioned this print, which I addreſs to your curioſity merely, though the lines upon the Biſhop are humourous enough.—Now I mention curioſity; do you take notice of the many quaint con-

trivan-

trivances made uſe of to catch peoples natural inquiſitiveneſs in the pamphlets, viz. "Are theſe "things ſo?"—"Yes, they are."—What then?"—"The devil of a ſtory."—"Hoy, boys."—"Up go "we."—And a thouſand others.—What do you think muſt be my expence, who love to pry into every thing of this kind? Why, truly, one ſhilling. My company goes to George's Coffee-houſe, where, for that ſmall ſubſcription, I read all pamphlets under a three-ſhilling dimenſions; and, indeed, any larger ones would not be fit for coffee-houſe peruſal. —Lord Dudley lent me two ſermons, given him at the Houſe of Lords, which I read laſt night. In the firſt, there are a great many deep animadverſions delivered in a ſtyle that is tolerable; in the other, there is as great a want of common Engliſh as there is plenty of common obſervations.——Have you ſeen the ſermons on the Martyrdom and on the Faſt-day? If you read either, ſend for the firſt.——You'll find me degenerate from a gentle bard into a ſnarling critic, if my poem does not pleaſe (you'll ſay I am no very candid one at preſent): but let its fate be what it will, I ſhall lay no ſmall ſtreſs upon the opinion of ſome that have approved it. As it is at preſent *in keeping*, it diſcovers no uncommon impudence, and runs no very great riſque; but who can anſwer for it, when it has the gracelleſneſs to *come upon the town?* ——*Ora pro nobis* muſt ſoon be my motto. Its vir-

of addition or diminution,

diminution, and the pious assistance of friends must ——but I am no Roman Catholic.—The intrinsic merit of a book when it is printed, as well as the past life and conversation of a man that is departed, must damn, or give it immortality—I mean, to a certain degree. I scribble what comes uppermost, and desire you would do the same.—

Yours,

W. S.

V. To a Friend, from London, describing his Temper, and Manner of Living there.

From Mr. Wintle's, Perfumer, near Temple-Bar, &c. 6th Feb. 1740.

Dear Sir,

I AM now with regard to the *town* pretty much in the same state in which I expect to be always with regard to the *world*; sometimes exclaiming and railing against it; sometimes giving it a good word, and even admiring it. A sun-shiny day, a tavern-supper after a play well acted, and now and then an invigorating breath of air in the Mall, never fail of producing a cheerful effect. I don't know whether I gave you any account of Quin's acting Falstaff in my former letter: I really imagined that I saw you tittering on one side me, shaking your sides, and sometimes scarce containing yourself. You will

pardon

and in the attitude in which I placed you, ſince it was what ſeemed *natural* at that circumſtance of time: Comus I have once been at, for the ſake of the ſongs, though I deteſt it in any *light*: but as a *dramatic* piece, the *taking* of it ſeems a *prodigy*; yet indeed *ſuch-a-one*, as was pretty tolerably accounted for by a gentleman who ſat by me in the *boxes*. This learned ſage, being aſked how he liked the play, made anſwer, "He could not tell — pretty well, he thought "— or indeed as well as any other play — he always "took it, that people only came there to ſee and to "be ſeen — for as for what was ſaid, he owned, "he never underſtood any thing of the matter." I told him, I thought a great many of its admirers were in his caſe, if they would but own it.

On the other hand, it is amazing to conſider to what an univerſality of learning people make pretenſions here. There's not a drawer, a chair or hackney coach-man, but is politician, poet, and judge of polite literature. Chimney-ſweepers damn the Convention, and black-ſhoe-boys cry up the Genius of Shakeſpear. "The Danger of writing Verſe" is a very good thing; if you have not read it, I would recommend it to you as poetical. But now I talk of Learning, I muſt not omit an interview which I accidentally had the other night in company with Lord D — and one Mr. C —. We were taken to ſup at a private houſe, where I found a perſon whom I had never ſeen before. The man behaved exceeding modeſtly

modeſtly and well; till, growing a little merry over a bottle (and being a little countenanced by the ſubject we were upon), he pulls out of his pocket about half a dozen ballads, and diſtributes them amongſt the company. I (not finding at firſt they were of his own compoſition) read one over, and, finding it a dull piece of ſtuff, contented myſelf with obſerving that it was exceedingly well *printed*. But to ſee the man's face on this occaſion would make you pity the circumſtance of an author as long as you live. His jollity ceaſed (as a flame would do, ſhould you pour water upon it); and, I believe, for about five minutes, he ſpoke not a ſyllable. At length, recovering himſelf, he began to talk about his country-ſeat, about Houghton-Hall, and ſoon after deſired a health, imagining (as I found afterwards) that Lord D— would have given Sir Robert's. But he did not, naming Sir T— L—: mine, which followed, was that of Mr. L—. Now, who do you think this ſhould be, but honeſt Ralph Freeman (at leaſt the writer of the paper ſo ſubſcribed), your father's old friend and intimate, Sir Robert's right-hand, a perſon that lives elegantly, drives ſix of the beſt horſes in town, and plays on St. John's organ: (you know Mr. L— is not only Sir Robert's greateſt enemy, but the Gazetteer's proper antagoniſt.) We were invited to ſee him very civilly, and indeed the man behaved with the utmoſt good-humour, without arrogance, or any attempts at wit, which, probably, would not

have

have been very ſucceſsful.—Aſk your father what he would ſay to me, if I ſhould join in the cauſe with his old friend, and take a good annuity under Sir Robert, which, I believe, I might have; and little encouragement, God knows, have I met with on the other ſide of the queſtion. I ſay, I believe I *might have*, becauſe I know a certain perſon gives penſions of three pounds a-week to porters and the moſt illiterate ſtupid fellows you can imagine, to talk in his behalf at ale-houſes: where they ſit ſo long a time, and are as regularly relieved as one centry relieves another.—At leaſt tell him that I expect in his anſwer to my letter (which I ſhall not allow him to aſſign to you), he write ſomething to confirm me in my *integrity*, and to make me prefer him, and you, and honeſty, to lace, brocade, and the ſmiles of the ladies,

"Et Veneri, & cunis, & plumis Sardanapali."

But I hope to keep my Hercules in view, whether in print or manuſcript; and though I am as fond of pleaſure as moſt people, yet I ſhall obſerve the rule,

"Poſitam ſic tangere noli."

I DESIRE I may hear from you next poſt: I have a line or two, which I intend for the *ſons of utter darkneſs* (as you call them) next magazine: I would ſend them to you, for your advice; but cannot readily

find them. I like every thing in Mr. Somervile, but the running of the laſt line. I think to inſ[illegible] them. Should be glad to have a line or two of *your*, that one may make a bold attack. I look on it as *fun*, without the leaſt emotion, I aſſure you.

I am, dear Sir,

Your faithful ſcribbling ſlave,

W. SHENSTONE.

VI. To the ſame at Bath, on his publiſhing his Poem of The Judgement of HERCULES.

From Mr. Wintle's,
April 30, 1740.

My good friend!

I HEARTILY thank you for the ſervice your letter did me; and a conſiderable ſervice, no doubt, it *is*, to raiſe the ſpirits of a perſon ſo habitually diſpirited as I have been for ſome time. For this, and all former favours, as the ſullen fellow ſays in Shakeſpear, "I thank you; I am not of many "words, but I thank you."

I BEG you would ceaſe to apologize for your letters: In the firſt place, it will lay *me* under a neceſſity of doing *ſo*; and, in the next place, you may be aſ-

ſur[illegible]d,

sured, that no friendly letter of yours will ever be otherwise than infinitely agreeable to me.

I SENT a letter to Mr. Marriett at Bath, to be left with you at your former place of residence; you will be so kind as to give it to him.

IF I wish for a *large* fortune, it is rather for the sake of my friends than myself: or, to compromise the matter with those moralists who argue for the universality of *self-interest*, it is to gratify myself in the company, and in the gratifications, of my friends.

DR. Ratcliff has sent me a letter, which gives me much *satisfaction* in respect of my poem; notwithstanding, he cannot forbear adding, that he expects to hear, since my pen has so well adorned the fable, that my conduct will with equal propriety and elegance illustrate the moral. However, the simple approbation of a *sincere* man affects one more than Pliny's panegyric could do from a more courtly one.

THERE are several errors of the press, which neither sagacity nor vigilance itself, I now see, can prevent, and which I beg you to correct with your pen in a copy which I must get you to present to C— L— together with the inclosed letter. Please to be at the expence of having it stitched in purple paper, and gilt at the edges; and I will re-pay you.

I was loitering yesterday in the coffee-room, when two persons came in, well-dressed, and called for my poem; read a page or two, and commended the four lines upon Mr. L— extremely, ("Lov'd by that Prince, &c.") repeated them forty times, and in the end got them by heart, mentioned them to a *third* person, who said he knew of no virtue that the Prince *was* fired with, and then endeavoured to mimic the Prince's way of talking; but, says he, *I'll* shew *the four best lines in the poem*, and then proceeded to "'Twas "Youth's perplexing stage, &c." which are flat enough, God knows—but to my first heroes; one of them reads, "When great Alcides to a grove retir'd." *Ay, ay, you know Mr. L— did retire, he was in the secession; read on; you'll find he mentions Delia anon. Don't you remember Mr. L— wrote a song upon Delia? but proceed—you'll find he is going to give a description of two ladies, of different characters, that were in love with Mr. L—. One was* (here he named two names, which I have forgot.) *Upon my word, it is fine: I believe it is Pope's; but how comes Pope to praise himself there?* ("Lov'd by that Bard, &c.") *No doubt, however, it was written by Mr. Pope or Mr. D—.*

My critics proceeded to the reading of the last simile *immediately*, *without* the lines preceding it, and, agreeing that it was a very good thing, called out for

for "The Oeconomy of Love." So you see, "Laudant *illa*, sed *ista* legunt," is the case. A person cannot be supposed vain from the approbation of such critics, or else I would not have inserted such a *commendatory* paragraph. I never enquire how my poem takes, and am *afraid* to do so. However, I find *some do* allow it to be *Mallet's*—I am impatient till I hear from you: I shall be here till this day fortnight; afterwards at The Leasowes—I must add this, "Ne, studio nostri, *pecces*;" but at the same time also

——— "O defend,
"Against your judgement, your most faithful friend."

W. S.

THESE *opposite* petitions delineate my state of mind: it is well for me that I have you at Bath.

VII. To Mr. JAGO, on the Death of his Father.

Dear Mr. Jago, Leasowes, Aug. 28, 1740.

I FIND some difficulty in writing to you on this melancholy occasion. No one can be more unfit to attempt to lessen your grief than myself, because no one has a deeper sense of the *cause* of your affliction. Though I would by no means be numbered

ed by you amongſt the common herd of your acquaintance that tell you they are ſorry, yet it were impertinent in me to mention a mere friend's concern to a perſon intereſted by ſo many more tender regards. Beſides, I ſhould be glad to alleviate your ſorrow, and ſuch ſort of condolence tends but little to promote that end. I do not chuſe to flatter you; neither could I, more eſpecially at this time; but though I could perhaps find enough to ſay to perſons of leſs ſenſe than you, I know of nothing but what your own reaſon muſt have ſuggeſted. Concern indeed may have ſuſpended the power of that faculty; and upon that pretence, I have a few things that I would ſuggeſt to you. After all, it is time alone that *can* and *will* cure *all* afflictions but ſuch as are the conſequence of vice; and yours, I am ſure, proceeds from a *contrary* principle.

I HEARD accidentally of this ſorrowful event, and accompanied you to London with the utmoſt concern. I wiſhed it was in my power to mitigate your griefs by ſharing them, as I have often found it in yours to augment my pleaſures by ſo doing.

ALL that I can recommend to you is, not to confine your eye to any ſingle event in life, but to take in your whole circumſtances before you repine.

WHEN

WHEN you reflect that you have loſt one of the beſt of men in a father, you ought to comfort yourſelf that you had ſuch a father; to whom I cannot forbear applying theſe lines from Milton:

——— "Since to part!
"Go, heav'nly gueſt, ethereal meſſenger!
"Sent by whoſe ſovereign goodneſs we adore!
"Gentle to me and affable has been
"Thy condeſcenſion, and ſhall be honour'd ever
"With grateful'ſt memory ———"

End of Book VIII. PAR. LOST.

I WOULD have you by all means come over hither as ſoon as you can. I will endeavour to render the time you ſpend *here* as ſatisfactory as it is in my power; and I hope you will ever look upon me as your hearty friend, through all the viciſſitudes of life.

PRAY give my humble ſervice to Mrs. Jago and your brother.

I am, with the utmoſt affection,

Yours ſincerely,

W. SHENSTONE.

VIII. To Mr. Reynolds.

Dear Sir, Leaſowes, Aug. 1740.

WONDERFUL were the dangers and difficulties through which I went, the night I left you at Barels: which I looked upon as ordained by fate for the temporal puniſhment of obſtinacy. It was very kind, and in character, for you to endeavour to deter me from the ways of darkneſs; but having a ſort of *penchant* for needleſs difficulties, I have an undoubted right to indulge myſelf in them, ſo long as I do not inſiſt upon any one's pity. It is true, theſe ought not to exceed a certain degree; they ſhould be *lenia tormenta*; and I muſt own the labours I underwent that night did not come within the bounds which my imagination had preſcribed. I cannot forbear mentioning one imminent danger. I rode along a conſiderable piece of water, covered ſo cloſe with trees, that it was as probable I might have purſued the channel, which was dangerous, as my way out of it. Or, to put my caſe in a more poetical light, having by night intruded upon an amour betwixt a Wood-nymph and a River-god, I owed my eſcape to Fortune, who conveyed me from the vengeance which they might have taken. I put up finally at a little alehouſe about ten o'clock, and lay all night awake, counting the cords which ſupported me, which I could more ſafely ſwear to than

to either bed or blanket. For farther particulars, ſee my epiſtle to the Paſtor Fido of Lapworth.—Mr. Graves ſays, he ſhould be glad to ſhew you any civilities in his power, upon his own acquaintance; and will ſerve you as far as his vote goes, upon my recommendation; but is afraid, without the concurrence of ſome more conſiderable friends, your chance will be but ſmall *this* year, &c. If the former part of this news gives you any pleaſure, I aſſure you it gives me no leſs to communicate it; and this pleaſure proceeds from a principle which would induce me to ſerve you myſelf if it ſhould ever be in my power.—I ſaw Mr. Lyttelton laſt week: he is a candidate for the county of Worceſter, together with Lord Deerhuſt; I hope Mr. Somervile will do him the honour to appear as his friend, which he muſt at leaſt think ſecond to that of ſucceeding.

I HEAR you are commenced Chaplain ſince I ſaw you. I wiſh you joy of it. The Chaplain's title is infinitely more agreeable than his office; and I hope the ſcarf, which is expreſſive of it, will be no diminutive thing, no four-penny-halfpenny piece of ribboning; but that it will

"High o'er the neck its ruſtling folds diſplay,
"Diſdain all uſual bounds, extend its ſway,
"Uſurp the head, and puſh the wig away."

I HOPE it will prove ominous, that my firſt letter is a congratulatory one; and if I were to have opportunities of ſending all ſuch, it would entirely quadrate with the ſincere wiſhes of

Your faithful humble ſervant,

W. SHENSTONE.

I BEG my compliments to Mr. Somervile, Mrs. Knight, and your family.

IX. To the ſame.

From Mr. Wintle's, Perfumer, at the King's Arms, by Temple-Bar, Fleet-Street, 1740.

SIR,

I AM heartily obliged to Mr. Somervile, that he will make uſe of any means to ſerve me; more eſpecially that he will take the trouble of conſulting which may be moſt effectual to that end; and I deſire you would repreſent theſe ſentiments to him in the moſt expreſſive manner.

I HAVE, ſince I arrived here (which was laſt Saturday night), heard Lowe ſing, and ſeen Cibber act. The laureat ſpoke an epilogue, made *upon*, and, I ſuppoſe,

ſuppoſe, *ly* himſelf, in which he does not only make a bare confeſſion, but an *oſtentation* of all his follies:

" Of *ſuch* (ſays he) whoe'er demands a bill of fare
" May look into my life—he'll find 'em there;"

or ſome ſuch lines, I cannot accurately recollect them. I do not wonder he pleaſed extremely; but to a conſidering man there is ſomething ſtrangely diſagreeable, to hear a ſcandalous life recommended by one of his age, and as much ſatisfaction ſhewn in the review of it as if it had been a perfect galaxy of virtues. An Athenian audience would have ſhewn their different ſentiments on this occaſion. But I am acting the part of Jeremy Collier, and indeed in ſome degree of an hypocrite, for I confeſs I was highly pleaſed with him myſelf. I have nothing to add, but a fine cloſe, if I had it; as I have not, you muſt be content with the vulgar one, that I am

Yours ſincerely,

W. SHENSTONE.

X. To the ſame.

Dear Sir, 1740.

I THANK you for the favour of your laſt letter, particularly your readineſs in tranſmitting to me any thing of Mr. Somervile's. It ſo fell out, that Mr.

Mr. Outing delivered to me the verſes, and I had the pleaſure of reading them, about a moment before he gave me your epiſtle.

THE town expected ſomething of importance, namely, a motion for a committee of enquiry into late meaſures, would be moved for to-day. If any thing of this nature has been carrying on, I will add an account of it before I cloſe my letter. In the mean time it is, I believe, very credible, that Lord Orford has a continued influence over the King; and that the Duke of Argyle is ſufficiently diſguſted, to have talked of the reſignation of his poſts again.

AN odd ſtory enough the following, and I believe true! Somebody, that had juſt learnt that H—eW—'s gentleman's name was Jackſon, writes a letter to Mr. Floyer, Keeper of the Tower, intimating his maſter's deſire to ſpeak with him. Floyer dreſſes the next morning, and waits upon H—e, comes into his room—"Sir, ſays H—e, I really dont't know "you—" "Sir, my name is Floyer—" "Ay, by "G—d, that may be; but, by G—d, I don't know "you for all that—" "Sir, ſays he, I am Keeper of "the Tower—" G—d d—n your blood, ſays "H—e, produce your warrant; d—n you, produce "your warrant; or, by G—d, I'll kick ye down "ſtairs—"

FRIGHTED

FRIGHTED at theſe threats, the gentleman, retired; and in his way home had leiſure to conſider the joke that was put upon him, and more particularly turned upon the perſon to whom he was ſent.

IF you direct a line to Mr. Shuckburgh's, bookſeller, in Fleet-ſtreet, it will arrive agreeable to

Your humble ſervant,

March, Tueſday Night. W. SHENSTONE.

My compliments to your patron.

XI. To the ſame.

SIR, 1740.

YOUR laſt letter gave me a good deal of uneaſineſs in regard to Mr. Somervile's indiſpoſition. I hope, if he is better, you will omit no opportunity of gratifying me with the news of it. I ſhall be glad to employ you and Mr. Jago in my little rivulet before winter comes, when one muſt bid adieu to rural beauties. Thoſe charming ſcenes, which the poets, in order to render them more compleat, have furniſhed with ladies, muſt be ſtripp of all their ornaments. Thoſe incomparable nymphs, the Dryads and the Nereids, which have been my conſtant companions this ſhort ſummer, will vaniſh to more pleaſ-

ing

ing climes; and I [illegible] to ſeek my aſſiſtance in real beauties inſtead of imaginary ones. In ſhort, I am thinking to live part of this winter in Worceſter, or ſome other town. I was at a concert there, a very full one, lately. I obſerved Dr. Mackenzie talking to Mr. Lyttelton; and I hope, on that account, he is in his intereſt: otherwiſe Mr. Somervile would do Mr. Lyttelton great ſervice by engaging him.—Mr. Lyttelton took occaſion to mention to me the obligation he lay under to Mr. Somervile for his letter, as well as his other deſigns in his favour—that he had long received great pleaſure from that gentleman's pen, and wiſhed for the honour of his acquaintance. I told him, I believed the ſatisfaction would be mutual, or to that purpoſe. He added, that The Chace was an *extremely* beautiful poem, the beſt by far ever written on the ſubject. But now the fiddles ſqueaked, the harpſichord jingled, and the performers began to feel the divine enthuſiaſm. The god of muſic invaded them as he did the Sibyll of old:

"Deus, ecce Deus! cui talia fanti
"Ante fores, ſubito non vultus, non color unus,
"Non comptæ manſere comæ; ſed pectus anhe-
"lum.
"Et rabie fera corda tument, majorque videri,
"Nec mortale ſonans."

I AM,

I AM, Sir, with all due compliments to Mr. Somervile,

Yours ſincerely,

W. SHENSTONE.

XII. To Mr. JAGO, from London, with Obſervations on the Stage, &c.

SIR, Jan. 21, 1741.

YOU ſee I am *extremely expeditious* in anſwering your letter; the reaſon of which is a very powerful one, namely, the information which I received laſt night, that it would be agreeable to you I ſhould do ſo. Pleaſe therefore to ſet aſide the ſum of eighteen pence, or thereabouts, for letters which you will receive whilſt I am in London; and, to make it ſeem the leſs profuſely ſquandered, conſider it amongſt any other caſual expences which you careleſsly ſubmit to, merely to gratify your curioſity.

I WENT the other night, with the greateſt expectations, to ſee "The Merry Wives of Windſor" performed at Covent-Garden. It is impoſſible to expreſs how much every thing fell below my ideas. But I have *conſidered ſince*; and I find that my expectations were really more unjuſt than their manner of acting.

3. *Perſons,*

Perſons, in order to act well, ſhould have ſomething of the author's fire, as well as a polite education. And what makes this the clearer to me is, that you hear ten plays well read by gentlemen in company, to one that you find well performed upon the ſtage.—Nothing can be more ignorant or affected than the ſcornful airs which ſome people give themſelves at a country play; becauſe, forſooth, they have ſeen plays in town. The truth is, the chief advantage of plays in town lies entirely in the ſcenery. You ſeldom obſerve a ſet of ſtrollers without one or two actors who are quite equal to their parts; and I really know of no good one at either of the two Theatres Royal, except Cibber who rarely acts, and Mrs. Clive. I will add one more, in *compliance* with my *own* taſte *merely*; and that is Mr. Neal, a fellow who, by *playing the fool*, has gained my particular *eſteem*.

AFTER the play, we had an *entertainment*; falſely ſo called! It was that of Orpheus and Eurydice, the moſt *un-muſical* thing I ever heard, and which laſted, I believe, three hours, with ſome intermixtures of Harlequin; both ſo dull, and yet heard with patience, that I was amazed, aſtoniſhed, confounded: but really a *man* of *ſenſe* ought not to be ſo; becauſe they were not calculated for *him*.

I WANT you here extremely: pray come up for a week. I ſuppoſe you will not, ſo I will not argue ſuperfluouſly.

ſuperfluouſly. However, write ſoon; and believe that your letters are the moſt agreeable things in the world to, Sir,

Yours moſt faithfully,

W. S.

XIII. To the ſame.

Dear Sir, 1741.

AS I have no ſort of library in town, I find ſeveral minutes upon my hands, for which, if I employ them in ſcribbling to my friends, they are but *ſtenderly obliged* to me. I hope no friend of mine will ever be induced, by my *example*, to do any thing but avoid it; I believe no one breathing can ſay with more truth, "Video meliora, &c." It is not from a ſpirit of jealouſy that I would adviſe my acquaintance to ſeek happineſs in the regular path of a fixed life. But, though I very highly approve it, and envy it; my particular turn of mind would be as little ſatisfied with it as it is like to be in a *different* one. Yet, however I *complain*, I muſt own I have a good deal reconciled myſelf to this mixture of gratification and diſappointment, which muſt be my lot till the laſt totally prevails.

YET,

YET, after all, to tell you the truth, I am not pleaſed with being adviſed to retire. I was ſaying the other day to Mr. Outing, that I *had* been ambitious more than I was at preſent, and that I grew leſs ſo every day. Upon this he chimed in with me, and approved my deſpondency; ſaying, "that *he* alſo had been ambitious, but found it would not do." Do you think I liked him much for this?—no—I wheeled about, and ſaid, "I did not think with him; for I "ſhould always find myſelf whetted by diſappointments, and more violent in proportion to the intricacy of the game." I ſpent a night with him and Mr. Meredith, and with him and Mr. Dean: in the latter party he had laid his hand upon his ſword ſix times, and *threatened to put a dozen men to death*, one of which was Broughton the prize-fighter.—Mr. Whiſtler's company ſeldom *relieves* me on an evening; and I go to plays but *ſeldom*, becauſe I intend no more to *give countenance* to the *pit*.—I have got a belt!!! which diſtinguiſhes me as much as a *garter*—it captivates the eyes of all beholders, and binds their underſtandings in golden bandage.—I heard a pedant punning upon the word βέλτιστος; and a wag whiſpering that I was related to *Beltiſhazzar*. In ſhort I may ſay, from the Dragon of Wantley,

"No girdle, nor belt, e'er excell'd it;
"It frightens the men in a minute:
"No maiden yet ever beheld it,
"But wiſh'd herſelf tied to me in it."

THE

THE Dunciad is, doubtleſs, Mr. Pope's dotage, τὸ Διὸς βέλτιον; flat in the whole, and including, with ſeveral tolerable lines, a *number* of weak, obſcure, and even punning ones. What is now read by the *whole world*, and the *whole world's wife*, is, Mr. Hervey's Letter to Sir T. Hanmer. I own my *taſte* is gratified in it, as well as that *unlikeneſs* natural to every one; though people ſay (I think idly) he is mad. For this *long* letter I ſhall expect *two*, ſoon after you have received it. Adieu!

DID you ſee a poem, called "Woman in Miniature," written with ſpirit, but incorrect? The people that were carrying Lord Orford in effigy, to behead him on Tower Hill, came into the box where he was, accidentally, at George's, to beg money of him, amongſt others.

XIV. To Mr. ——, on his taking Orders in the Church.

Dear Sir, Lcaſowes, June 8, 1741.

I WRITE to you out of the abundant inclination I have to hear from you; imagining that, as you gave me a direction, you might poſſibly expect to receive a previous letter from me. I want to be informed of the impreſſions you receive from your *new*

circumſtances. The firſt averſion which ſome people have to orders is, what I fancy you will remove in ſuch as you converſe with. I take it to be owing partly to dreſs, and partly to the *avowed profeſſion* of religion. A young clergyman, that has diſtinguiſhed his genius by a compoſition or two of a polite nature, and is capable of dreſſing *himſelf*, and his *religion*, in a different manner from the generality of his profeſſion, that is, without formality, is certainly a genteel character. I ſpeak this not with any ſly deſign to adviſe, but to intimate that I think you very capable of *ſhining* in a dark-coloured coat.—You muſt conſider me yet as a man of the world, and endeavouring to elicit that pleaſure from gaiety which my reaſon tells me I ſhall never find.—It is impoſſible to expreſs how ſtupid I have been ever ſince I came home, inſomuch that I cannot write a common letter without ſix repetitions. This is the third time I have begun yours, and you ſee what ſtuff it is made up of. I muſt e'en haſten to matter of fact, which is the comfortable reſource of dull people, though, even as to that, I have nothing to *communicate*. But I would be glad to know, whether you are under a neceſſity of reſiding on week-days; and, if not, why I may not expect you a day or two at The Leaſowes very ſoon.—Did you make any enquiry concerning the number of my poems ſold at Oxford? or did you hear any thing concerning it that concerns me to hear?—Will S—— (for that is his true name) is the exceſs of ſimplicity

and

and good-nature. He ſeems to have all the induſtry imaginable to divert and amuſe people, without any ambitious ends to ſerve, or almoſt any concern whether he has ſo much as a laugh allowed to his ſtories, any farther than as a laugh is an indication that people are delighted. This, joined with his turn of thought, renders him quite agreeable. I wiſh it were in my power to conciliate acquaintance with half his eaſe.—Pray do not delay writing to me. Adieu!

W. SHENSTONE.

XV. To Mr. GRAVES, on ſimilar Taſte and Manners.

Dear Sir, The Leaſowes, Sept. 23, 1741.

I WAS very agreeably entertained by your laſt letter, as indeed I am by every one of yours. It were affectation to except a paragraph or two on account of partiality, where, to ſay the truth, the partiality itſelf pleaſes one. This I am very poſitive of, that to have a friend of your temper and taſte will always give me pleaſure, whether I pleaſe the world or no; but to pleaſe ever ſo much, without ſome ſuch friendſhip, would in all probability ſignify but little. I ſhall, therefore, value any means that tend to confirm my opinion of your eſteem for me, preferably to any that ſhew me I am merely de-

ſerving of it. After all, though a very limited number of *friends* may be ſufficient, an idle perſon ſhould have a large *acquaintance*; and I believe I have the leaſt of any one that ever rambled about ſo much as I have done. I do not know how it is, but I abſolutely deſpair of ever being introduced into the world. It may be objected by ſome (but you will not object it), that I may be acquainted with a ſufficient number of people that are my *equals*, if I *will*. They may be my *equals* and *ſuperiors* whom they mean, for aught I care; but their converſation gives me no more pleaſure than the *canking* of a gooſe, or the quacking of a duck, in affluent circumſtances: rather *leſs* indeed of the two, becauſe the idea of the fat gooſe flatters one's appetite; but the *human gooſe* is neither fit to be heard nor eaten. I wiſh indeed to be *ſhewn into* good company; but, if I can at all diſtinguiſh the nature of my inclinations, it is more in hopes of meeting with a refined converſation, than any thing elſe. I do not at all inſiſt that my genius is *better* than that of my vociferous neighbours; if it is *different*, it is a ſufficient reaſon why I ſhould ſeek ſuch companions as ſuit it; and whether they are found in high or low life, is little to the purpoſe. But you will perhaps diſcern the operations of *vanity* in all my endeavours; I will not diſagree with you, provided you will allow *amuſement* an equal ſhare in them. It is the vanity to be intimate with men of diſtinguiſhed ſenſe, not of diſtinguiſhed fortune.

tane. And this is a vanity which you ſhould not diſapprove, becauſe it will bind me a laſting friend to you and your family.

I HAVE been over at Shiffnall, and, in order to make myſelf agreeable, rode a-hunting with Mr. Pitt. I confeſs I was ſomewhat diverted; and my horſe was ſo much an enthuſiaſt, as to be very near running headlong into a deep water. I believe, if I were to turn ſportſman, I ſhould ſoon break my neck for fear the huntſman ſhould deſpiſe me.

I WILL certainly endeavour to ſee you at Birmingham; but beg you would write me a long letter in the mean time: and contrive, if you can, to make it look like a packet as your laſt did, for the ſight thereof is exceedingly comfortable.

THOUGH my wiſhes will not ſuffer me to believe that your eyes are in the danger you repreſent; yet, ſuppoſing them to be only very weak, I would recommend ſome muſical inſtrument that is moſt agreeable to you. I have often looked upon muſic as my dernier reſort, if I ſhould ever diſcard the world, and turn eremite entirely. Conſider what other amuſement can make an equal impreſſion in old age.

I HAVE filled my paper, not without difficulty, through the barrenneſs of my brain and ſituation:

my heart ever flows with the moſt warm ſtreams of gratitude and affection for you. Adieu!

W. S.

XVI. To a Friend, expreſſing his Diſſatisfaction at the Manner of Life in which he is engaged.

Dear Sir, 1741.

I WONDER I have not heard *from* you lately—*of* you indeed I have, from Mr. W—. If you could come over, probably, I might go back with you for a day or two; for my horſe, I think, gets rather better, and may, with indulgence, perform ſuch a journey. I want to adviſe with you about ſeveral matters:—to have your opinion about a *building* that I *have built*, and about a journey which I deſign to Bath; and about numberleſs things, which, as they are numberleſs, cannot be comprehended in this paper. I am

Your moſt affectionate friend,

W. SHENSTONE.

Now I am come home from a viſit—every little uneaſineſs is ſufficient to introduce my whole train of melancholy conſiderations, and to make me utterly diſſatisfied with the life I now lead, and the life which I foreſee

I foreſee I ſhall lead. I am angry, and envious, and dejected, and frantic, and diſregard all preſent things, juſt as becomes a madman to do. I am infinitely pleaſed (though it is a gloomy joy) with the application of Dr. Swift's complaint, "that he is forced to "die in a rage, like a poiſoned rat in a hole." My ſoul is no more ſuited to the figure I make, than a cable rope to a cambric needle:—I cannot bear to ſee the advantages alienated, which I think I could deſerve and reliſh ſo much more than thoſe that have them.—Nothing can give me patience but the ſoothing ſympathy of a friend, and *that* will only turn my rage into ſimple melancholy.—I believe ſoon I ſhall bear to ſee nobody. I *do* hate all hereabouts already, except one or two. I will have my *dinner* brought upon my table in my abſence, and the plates fetched away in my abſence; and nobody ſhall ſee me: for I can never bear to appear in the ſame ſtupid mediocrity for years together, and gain no ground. As Mr. G— complained to me (and, I think, you too, both unjuſtly), "I am no character."—I have in my temper ſome rakiſhneſs, but it is checked by want of ſpirits; ſome ſolidity, but it is ſoftened by vanity; ſome eſteem of learning, but it is broke in upon by lazineſs, imagination, and want of memory, &c.—I could reckon up twenty things throughout my whole circumſtances wherein I am thus tantalized. Your fancy will preſent them.—Not that all I ſay here will ſignify to *you*: I am only under a fit of diſſatisfaction, and to grum-

ble does me good—only excuſe me, that I cure myſelf at your expence. Adieu!

XVII. To the ſame.

Dear Sir, 1741.

YOU muſt give me leave to complain of your laſt letter, three parts of which is filled with mere apology: I thought we had ſome time agreed, for our mutual emolument, to lay aſide ceremonies of this ſpecies, till I was made Poet-laureat, and you Biſhop of Wincheſter.—Why Biſhop of Wincheſter, for God's ſake? Why—becauſe—he is Prelate of the Garter—an order, in all kinds of ceremony ſo greatly abounding.—Here am I ſtill, trifling away my time, my money, and, I think, my health, which I fancy greatly inferior to what it would be in the country. Truth is, I do make ſhift to vary my days a little here; and, calling to mind the many irkſome hours, the ſtupid identity, of which I have been ſo often ſick in the country, I conclude that I am leſs *unhappy* than I ſhall find myſelf at home.—However, next month I hope to ſee The Leaſowes with an appetite.—Walks in the Park are now delightfully pleaſant! the company ſtays in the Mall till ten every night.—Mrs. Clive, Mrs. Woffington, Barbarini, and Mr. Garrick (happy man!) are gone over to Ireland, to act there for two months.

—Mr.

—Mr. Outing, the last time I saw him, told me how Dr. Mackenzie cured him of ever fighting with scrubs, &c. "I was just going, says he, to kick a fellow "down stairs, when the Doctor cries out, 'Mr. Out-"ing! hear our Scotch proverb before you proceed "any farther;—He that wrestles with a t—d, whether "he get or lose the victory, is sure to be b—s—t.' I "had great difficulty (continued he) to contain myself "till he had finished his story, but I found it so pat "that it saved the fellow's neck." I wish *I* could *cure* him as easily of these Quixotical narrations.—I know no soul in town that *has* any taste, which occasions me the spleen frequently. I remember W— and I were observing, that no creatures, though ever so loathsome (as toads, serpents, adders, &c.), would be half so hated as ourselves, if we were to give vent to our spleen, and censure affections so bluntly as some people do. I would not venture this hint, if I did not believe you experience the same. For my part, people contradict me in things I have *studied*, and am *certain* of; and I keep silence even from *good words* (*bons mots*), though it is pain and grief to me. I must give up my *knowledge* to *pretence*, or vent it with *diffidence* to fools; or, there is no peace. *These*, *these* are *justifiable* motives to wish for some degree of fame; that blind people may not bully a man that has his eyesight into their opinion that green is red, &c. Deference from fools is no *invidious* ambition: I dare own to you that I *have* this; and I will con-

tend that I have no more *haughty* one.—This ſubject I could expatiate upon with pleaſure; but I ſtop: a taſteleſs fellow has ſpoiled my Mall-walk to-night, and occaſioned you ſome trouble in theſe dull obſervations.—I am

Yours affectionately,

W. SHENSTONE.

XVIII. To Mr. ——, from The Leaſowes.

Dear Sir, The Leaſowes, June 17, 1741.

IF a friend of yours who lived in the fartheſt part of China were to ſend you a pinch of ſnuff wrapt up in a ſheet of writing-paper, I conceive the ſnuff would improve in value as it traveled, and gratify your curioſity extremely by the time it reached your fingers ends.—Very true—you will ſay;—why then, *that very conſideration* was my inducement to write to you at this time; and that ſort of progreſſional value is what you are to place upon my letter. For, be aſſured, I am not ignorant how much this my letter doth reſemble a pinch of ſnuff in point of ſignificancy, and that both the one and the other are what you may as well do without.—My letter is as follows.

You

You muſt know, in rainy weather, I always ſoothe my melancholy with the remembrance of *diſtant* friends only: you cannot eaſily conceive the high value I place upon their good qualities at ſuch a time; ſo that at this very inſtant I am *impatient* to ſee you. To-morrow, if the ſun ſhines bright, I ſhall only *wiſh* for your company as for a *very great good*. If you are unemployed when you leave Bath, I ſhould think, you might ſtay ſome time with me this ſummer. Refined ſenſe is what one is apt to value one's ſelf upon; but really, unleſs one has a refined ſoul or two to converſe with, it is an inconvenience. I have ruined my happineſs by converſing with you and a few more friends: as Falſtaff ſays to Hal, "Company, *witty* company, has been the ruin of "me!" Before I knew that pleaſure, I was as contented as could be in my ſolitude; and *now*, the *abſence* of *entertainment* is a *poſitive* pain to me. London has amuſed me a while with diverſions; but now they are paſt, and I have neither any one about me that *has* the leaſt *delicateſſe*, or that I can inſpire with the *ambition of having any*.—W—W— comes in a dirty *ſhirt*, and an old coat, without a ſtock, to pay me a viſit. He pulled out a pair of ſciſſars, and, giving them an intricate turn over his two thumbs, ſaid, that *he* could do that, and I could make a poem; ſome for *one* thing, ſome for another:

"Hic nigri ſuccus loliginis, hæc eſt
"Æruginis mera."

It

It was *ſplenetic* weather *too*.—The man is curſt who writes verſes, and lives in the country.—If his *celeſtial* part inſpires him to converſe with Juno, his *terreſtrial* one neceſſitates him to ſtoop to his landlady; ſo that he is in as diſagreeable a ſituation, as if one perſon were to pull him upwards by the *head*, and another downwards by the *tail*.—Do you never find any thing of this?—I mean, that your *pride* and your *ſocial* qualities torture you with their *different* attractions? Indeed one would always give way to the laſt, but that few are familiarity-proof, few but whom it teaches to deſpiſe one. Albeit I am conſcious of the bad influence of freedom myſelf; yet, whilſt it tends to diſcover wit, humour, and ſenſe, it only renders me more and more

Your moſt obedient friend and ſervant,

W. SHENSTONE.

XIX. To the ſame, with an Invitation to accompany him to Town.

Dear Sir, The Leaſowe, Nov. 25, 1741.

THE reaſon why I write to you ſo ſuddenly is, that I have a propoſal to make to you. If you could contrive to be in London for about a month from the

end

end of December, I imagine you would ſpend it agreeably enough along with me, Mr. Outing, and Mr. Whiſtler. According to my calculations, we ſhould be a very happy party at a play, coffee-houſe, or tavern. Do not let your ſupercilious friends come in upon you with their prudential maxims. Conſider, you are now of the proper age for pleaſure, and have not above four or five whimſical years left. You have not ſtruck one bold ſtroke yet, that I know of. Saddle your mule, and let us be jogging to the great city. I will be anſwerable for amuſement.—Let me have the pleaſure of ſeeing you in the pit, in a laughter as cordial and ſingular as your friendſhip. Come—let us go forth into the opera-houſe; let us hear how the eunuch-folk ſing. Turn your eye upon the lilies and roſes, diamonds and rubies; the Belindas and the Sylvias of gay life! Think upon Mrs. Clive's inexpreſſible comicalneſs; not to mention Hippeſley's joke-abounding phyſiognomy! Think, I ſay, *now*; for the time cometh when you ſhall ſay, "I have no pleaſure in them."

I AM conſcious of much merit in bringing about the interview betwixt Mr. L—— and Mr. S——; but merit, as Sir John Falſtaff ſays, is not regarded in theſe coſter-monger days.

PRAY now do not write me word that your *buſineſs* will not allow you *ten minutes* in a fortnight to write to me;

me; an excuſe fit for none but a cobler, who has ten children dependent upon a waxen thread. Adieu!

W. S.

XX. To the ſame, on occaſion of printing The School-miſtreſs.

Dear Sir, 1741.

I TRUST you do not pay double poſtage for my levity in incloſing theſe decorations. If I find you do, I will not ſend you the *thatch'd-houſe* and the birch-tree, with the ſun ſetting, and gilding the ſcene.—I expect a cargo of franks; and then for the beautiful picture of Lady Gainſborough, and the deformed portrait of my old ſchool-dame Sarah Lloyd! whoſe houſe is to be ſeen as thou traveleſt towards the native home of thy faithful ſervant—but ſhe ſleeps with her fathers, and is buried with her fathers—and Thomas her ſon *reigneth* in her ſtead!——I have the firſt ſheet to correct upon the table. I have laid aſide the thoughts of fame a good deal in this *un-promiſing* ſcheme; and fix them upon the landſkip which is engraving, the red letter which I purpoſe, and the fruit-piece which you ſee, being the moſt ſeemly ornaments of the firſt ſixpenny pamphlet that was ever ſo highly honoured. I ſhall incur the ſame reflection

ſlection with Ogilby, of having nothing good but my decorations.

I HAVE been walking in the Mall to-night.—The *Duke*, was there, and was highly delighted with two dogs; and ſtared at me more enormouſly than ever Duke did before. I do not know for what reaſon; unleſs for the ſame which made him admire the *other* puppy-dogs, becauſe they were large ones.

I EXPECT that in your neighbourhood, and in Warwickſhire, there ſhould be about twenty of my poems ſold. I print it myſelf. I am not yet ſatisfied about mottoes. That printed is this, "O, quà ſol habitabiles illuſtrat oras, maxime principum!" It muſt be ſhort, on account of the plate. I do not know but I may adhere to a very inſignificant one:

"En erit ergo
"Ille dies, mihi cum liceat *tua* dicere facta!"

I AM pleaſed with Mynde's engravings; and I can ſpeak without affectation, that fame is not *equally* in my thoughts.—One caution I gave Mr. G—, and it is what I would give to all my friends with whom I wiſh my intimacy may continue ſo much as I wiſh it may with you. Though I could bear the *diſregard* of the town, I could not bear to ſee my friends alter their opinion which they ſay they have of what I write,

write, though millions contradict them. It is an obſtinacy which *I* can boaſt of, and they that have more ſenſe may ſurely inſiſt on the liberty of judging for themſelves. If *you* ſhould faulter, I ſhould ſay you did not deſerve your *capacity* to judge for yourſelf. Write ſoon—you never are at a fault—"tantummodo *in-* "*cepto* opus eſt, cætera res expediet." Adieu!

W. S.

XXII. To the ſame, from Town, on the Death of Mr. Somervile, &c.

My good friend, 1741.

OUR old friend Somervile is dead! I did not imagine I could have been ſo ſorry as I find myſelf on this occaſion—"Sublatum quærimus." I can now excuſe all his foibles; impute them to age, and to diſtreſs of circumſtances: the laſt of theſe conſiderations wrings my very ſoul to think on. For a man of high ſpirit, conſcious of having (at leaſt in one production) generally pleaſed the world, to be plagued and threatened by wretches that are low in every ſenſe; to be forced to drink himſelf into pains of the body in order to get rid of the pains of the mind; is a miſery which I can well conceive, becauſe I may, without vanity, eſteem myſelf his equal in point of oeconomy,

conomy, and conſequently *ought* to have an eye on his misfortunes: (As you kindly hinted to me about twelve o'clock at the Feathers) I ſhould retrench;—I will; but you ſhall not ſee me:—I will not let you know that I took your hint in good part. I will do it at ſolitary times, as I may: and yet there will be ſome difficulty in it; for whatever the *world* might eſteem in poor Somervile, I really find, upon critical enquiry, that *I* loved him for nothing ſo much as his flocci-nauci-nihili-pili-fication of money.

MR. A—was honourably acquitted: Lord A—, who was preſent, and behaved very inſolently they ſay, was hiſſed out of court. They proved his application to the carpenter's ſon, to get him to ſwear againſt Mr. A—, though the boy was proved to have ſaid in ſeveral companies (*before* he had been kept at Lord A—'s houſe) that he was ſure the thing was accidental. Finally, it is believed he will recover the title of A—ea.

THE apprehenſion of the whores, and the ſuffocation of four in the round-houſe by the *ſtupidity* of the keeper, engroſſes the talk of the town. The ſaid houſe is re-building every day (for the mob on Sunday night demoliſhed it), and re-demoliſhed every night. The Duke of M—gh, J—— S—— his brother, Lord C— G—, were taken into the round-houſe, and confined from eleven at night till eleven next day: I am

not poſitive of the Duke of M—gh; the others are certain: and that a large number of people of the firſt faſhion went from the round-houſe to De Veil's, to give in informations of their uſage. The juſtice himſelf ſeems greatly ſcared; the proſecution will be carried on with violence, ſo as probably to hang the keeper, and there is an end.

Lord Bath's coachman got drunk and tumbled from his box, and he was forced to borrow Lord Orford's. Wits ſay, that it was but gratitude for my Lord Orford's *coachman* to drive my Lord Bath, as my Lord Bath *himſelf* had driven my Lord Orford. Thus they.

I HAVE ten million things to tell you; though they all amount to no more than that I wiſh to pleaſe you, and that I am

Your ſincere friend

and humble ſervant.

I AM pleaſed that I can ſay I knew Mr. Somervile, which I am to thank you for.

XXII. To

XXII. To Mr. GRAVES, on Benevolence and Friendſhip.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, Jan. 19, 1742-2.

I CANNOT forbear immediately writing to you: the pleaſure you laſt letter gave me put it out of my power to reſtrain the overflowings of my benevolence. I can eaſily conceive that, upon ſome extraordinary inſtances of friendſhip, my heart might be *ſi ſ rt attendri*, that I could not bear any reſtraint upon my ability to ſhew my gratitude. It is an obſervation I made upon reading to-day's paper, which contains an account of C. Khevenhuller's ſucceſs in favour of the Queen of Hungary. To think what ſublime affection muſt influence that poor unfortunate Queen, ſhould a faithful and zealous General revenge her upon her enemies, and reſtore her ruined affairs!

HAD a perſon ſhewn an eſteem and affection for *me*, joined with any elegance, or without any elegance, in the expreſſion of it, I ſhould have been in acute pain till I had given ſome ſign of my willingneſs to ſerve him.—From *all* this, I conclude that I have more humanity than ſome others.

PROBABLY enough I ſhall never meet with a larger ſhare of happineſs than I feel at preſent. If not, I

am thoroughly convinced, my pain is greatly superior to my pleasure. That pleasure is not absolutely dependent on the mind, I know from this, that I have enjoyed happier scenes in the company of some friends than I can possibly at present;—but alas! all the time you and I shall enjoy together, abstracted from the rest of our lives, and lumped, will not perhaps amount to a solid year and a half. How small a proportion!

People will say to one that talks thus, "Would "you die?" To set the case upon a right footing, they must take away the hopes of greater happiness in *this* life, the fears of greater misery hereafter, together with the bodily *pain* of dying, and address me in a disposition betwixt mirth and melancholy; and I could easily resolve them.

I do not know how I am launched out so far into this complaint: it is, perhaps, a strain of constitutional whining; the effect of the wind—did it come from the winds? to the winds will I deliver it:

"Tradam protervis in mare Creticum,
"Portare ventis—"

I will be as happy as my fortune will permit, and make others so:

"Pone me pigris ubi *nulla campis*
"*Arbor* æstiva recreatur aura—"

I will

I WILL be ſo.—The joke is, that the deſcription which you gave of that country was, that you had few trees about you; ſo that I ſhould *trick* Fortune if ſhe ſhould grant my petition implicitly. But, in earneſt, I intend to come and ſtay a day or two with you next ſummer.

MR. Whiſtler is at Mr. Goſling's, bookſeller, at the Mitre and Crown, in Fleet-ſtreet, and enquired much after you in his laſt letter to me. He writes to me; but I believe his affection for one weighs leſs with him while the town is in the other ſcale; though he is very obliging. I do not know whether I do right, when I ſay I believe we three, that is, in ſolitary circumſtances, have an equal idea of, and affection for, each other. I ſay, ſuppoſing each to be alone, or in the country, which is nearly the ſame; for ſcenes alter minds as much as the air influences bodies. For inſtance, when Mr. Whiſtler is in town, I ſuppoſe we love him better than he does us; and when we are in town, I ſuppoſe the ſame may be ſaid in regard to him.

THE true burleſque of Spenſer (whoſe characteriſtic is ſimplicity) ſeems to conſiſt in a *ſimple* repreſentation of ſuch things as one laughs to *ſee* or to *obſerve* one's ſelf, rather than in any *monſtrous* contraſt betwixt the thoughts and words. I cannot help think-

ing that my added flames have more of his manner than what you ſaw before, which you are not a judge of till you have read him.

W. S.

XXIII. To the ſame, with ſome Obſervations on SPENSER.

Dear Sir, The Leaſowes, 1742, the Day before Chriſtmas.

THOUGH your laſt letter ſeemed to put my correſpondence upon an oſtentatious footing, namely, an inclination to be witty, yet I aſſure you it was not any punctilious conſideration of that kind that has kept me ſo long ſilent. Indeed with ſome people one would ſtand upon the niceſt punctilios; for though ceremony be altogether lighter than vanity itſelf, yet it ſurely weighs as much as the acquaintance of the undeſerving. But this is trifling, becauſe it can have no reference to a perſon for whom I have the greateſt affection.

IN regard to my Oxford affairs, you did all I could expect. I have wrote ſince to Mr. M—, who, either for your ſake or mine, will, I dare ſay, ſettle them to my ſatisfaction.

I WISH

I wish your journey and head-ach would have permitted you to have been a little more particular concerning the ſeat of the Muſes; but I ſuppoſe nothing material diſtinguiſhed your fortnight.

Mr. Whiſtler has relapſed at Whitchurch; but purpoſed, when I laſt heard from him, to go to London before this time. I do not entirely underſtand his ſchemes, but ſhould have been ſincerely glad of his company with me this winter; and, he ſays, he is not fond of London.—For my part, I deſigned to go thither the next month, but the fever (which is chiefly violent in towns) diſcourages me.

Some time ago, I read Spenſer's Fairy Queen; and, when I had finiſhed, thought it a proper time to make ſome additions and corrections in my trifling imitation of him, The School-miſtreſs.—His ſubject is certainly bad, and his action inexpreſſibly confuſed; but there are ſome particulars in him that charm one. Thoſe which afford the greateſt ſcope for a ludicrous imitation are, his ſimplicity and obſolete phraſe; and yet theſe are what give one a very ſingular pleaſure in the peruſal. The burleſque which they occaſion is of quite a different kind to that of Philips's Shilling, Cotton's Travеſtie, Hudibras, or Swift's works; but I need not tell *you* this. I incloſe a copy, for your amuſement and opinion;

which, if franks are plentiful, you may return, and ſave me the *tedious* trouble of writing it over again. The other paper was, *bonæ fide*, written to divert my thoughts from pain, for the ſame reaſon that I ſmoaked; actions equally reputable.

MR. Somervile's poem upon hawking, called, "Field Sports," I ſuppoſe, is out by this time. It was ſent to Mr. Lyttelton, to be read to the Prince, to whom it was inſcribed. It ſeems, he is fond of hawking.

I HAVE often thought thoſe to be the moſt enviable people whom one leaſt envies—I believe, married men are the happieſt that are; but I cannot ſay I envy them, becauſe they loſe all their merit in the eyes of other ladies.

I BEG ſincerely that you would write in a week's time at furtheſt, that I may receive your letter *here* if I ſhould go from home this winter. I will never uſe any thing by way of concluſion, but your old Roman

Farewel!

W. SHENSTONE.

XXIV. To

XXIV. To the ſame, with a Continuation of the ſame Subject.

Dear Mr. Graves! June, 1742.

I AM glad the ſtay you make in Herefordſhire amuſes you, even though it puts you upon preferring the place you reſide at to my own place of reſidence. I do not know whether it be from the prejudice of being born at The Leaſowes, or from any real beauty in the ſituation; but I would wiſh no other, would ſome one, by an addition of two hundred pounds a year, put it in my power to exhibit my own deſigns. It is what I can now do in no other method than on paper. I live in ſuch an un-œconomical manner, that I muſt not indulge myſelf in the plantation of a tree for the future. I have glutted myſelf with the extremity of ſolitude, and muſt adapt my expences more to ſociable life. It is on this account that it ſeems more prudent for me to buy a chair while I am in town, than to carry down twelve guineas for the model of the tomb of Virgil, an urn, and a ſcheme or two more of like nature.—I long to have my picture, *diſtantly* approaching to a profile (the beſt manner I can think of to expreſs myſelf), drawn by Daviſon. I have ſeen your ſiſter's, and think the *face* well done in every reſpect; but am greatly indignant with other things of a leſs fixed nature. The cap, though a good cap enough,

enough, but a vile effect; the formality of ſtays, &c. not agreeable.—I do not know if you ſaw the picture of a Scotch girl there at full length? Miſs Graves has the advantage of her's, or any picture there, in her perſon; but certainly this girl's hair is inexpreſſibly charming! there is the genteeleſt negligence in it I ever ſaw in any picture:—what follows, but that I wiſh your ſiſter would give orders to pull off her cap, and have hair after the manner of this picture?—To ſpeak abruptly; as it *is*, I diſapprove it: were it altered, I ſhould like it beyond any I ever ſaw.—I am glad you are reading Spenſer: though his plan is deteſtable, and his *invention* leſs wonderful than moſt people imagine, who do not much conſider the obviouſneſs of allegory; yet, I think, a perſon of your diſpoſition muſt take great delight in his *ſimplicity*, his good-nature, &c. Did you obſerve a ſtanza that begins a canto ſomewhere,

"Nought is there under heav'n's wide hollowneſs
"That breeds," &c.?

When I bought him firſt, I read a page or two of the Fairy Queen, and cared not to proceed. After that, Pope's Alley made me conſider him ludicrouſly; and in that light, I think, one may read him with *pleaſure*. I am now (as Ch—mley with —), from trifling and laughing at him, really in love with him. I think even the metre pretty (though I ſhall

I ſhall never uſe it in earneſt); and that the laſt Alexandrine has an extreme majeſty.—Does not this line ſtrike you? (I do not juſtly remember what canto it is in)

"Brave thoughts and noble deeds did *evermore* in-
"ſpire."

Perhaps it is my fancy only that is enchanted with the running of it. Adieu!

W. S.

XXV. To the ſame, on the Publication of The School-miſtreſs.

Dear Mr. Graves!

I DEPENDED a good deal on an immediate anſwer from you, and am greatly fearful you never received a packet of little things which I ſent you to Oxford, incloſed in a frank; though, if it arrived at all, it muſt have arrived ſeveral days before you left it. I beſeech you to ſend me a line upon the receipt of theſe, which will free me from much perplexity; though it is doubtful whether I can defer my ſchemes ſo as to make your criticiſms of ſervice. I would have you ſend them notwithſtanding.

I CANNOT

I CANNOT help conſidering myſelf as a ſportſman (though God knows how poor a one in every ſenſe!) and the company as my game. They *fly up* for a little time; and then *ſettle* again. My cue is, to diſcharge my *piece* when I obſerve a number together. This week, they are ſtraggling round about their paſture, the town: the next, they will flock into it with violent appetites; and then I diſcharge my little piece amongſt them.—I aſſure you, I ſhall be very eaſy about the acquiſition of any fame by this thing; all I much wiſh is, to loſe none: and indeed I have ſo little to loſe, that this conſideration ſcarcely affects me.

I DARE ſay it muſt be very incorrect; for I have added eight or ten ſtanzas within this fortnight. But inaccuracy is more excuſable in ludicrous poetry than in any other. If it ſtrikes *any*, it muſt be merely people of *taſte*; for people of *wit* without taſte (which comprehends the larger part of the critical tribe) will unavoidably deſpiſe it. I have been at ſome pains to ſecure myſelf from A. Philips's misfortune, of mere *childiſhneſs*, "Little charm of placid mien, &c." I have added a ludicrous index, purely to ſhew (fools) that I am in jeſt:—and my motto, "O quà ſol habitabiles illuſtrat oras, maxime principum," is calculated for the ſame purpoſe. You cannot conceive how large the number is of thoſe that miſtake burleſque

leſque for the very fooliſhneſs it expoſes (which obſervation I made once at The Rehearſal, at Tom Thumb, at Chrononhotonthologos; all which are pieces of elegant humour). I have ſome mind to purſue this caution further; and advertiſe it, "The "School-miſtreſs, &c." A very *childiſh* performance every body knows (*novorum more*). But if a perſon ſeriouſly calls this, or rather burleſque, a childiſh or low ſpecies of poetry, he ſays wrong; for the moſt regular and formal poetry may be called trifling, folly, and weakneſs, in compariſon of what is written with a more *manly* ſpirit in ridicule of it.—I have been plagued to death about the ill execution of my deſigns.—Nothing is certain in London but expence, which I can ill bear. Believe me, *till death*,

Yours, ſincerely and particularly,

W. SHENSTONE.

XXVI. To the ſame; with a humorous Deſcription of his Conduct in regard to Form and Equipage.

Dear Sir, The Leaſowes, Nov. 1742.

PRESUMING you may be at Tiffington by this time, I write to ſolicit a deſcription of the ſeveral adventures, accidents, and phænomena, that have amuſed

muſed you in your travels; and will *equally* affect me as they relate to you. Above all things, be particular in regard to your calculations reſpecting Mickleton. I would have certainly met you there, as you deſired me: there is no company I am fonder of than yours and your ſiſter's; and no place at which I have ſpent more agreeable hours than Mickleton. But your brother has loſt one of his recommendations in my eye; that is, his *irregularity* of houſe-keeping. He has ſeveral left which are ſufficient to preſerve my utmoſt eſteem; but that was a jewel indeed! I love to go where there is nothing much more in form than myſelf. I have no objection to viſit *young*, *unſettled people*, with a mountebank's inconſiſtency in my equipage. But where a conſiderable family keeps up its forms (as marriage requires), I ſhould not care to appear with an hired horſe, and a *Sancho* for my valet." The caſe is, I *could* live in a way genteel enough, and uniformly ſo; but then I muſt forego megrims, whims, toys, and ſo forth. Now, though it gives me pain, *ſometimes*, not to appear of a piece; yet that *infrequent* pain is not a balance for the ſubſtantial happineſs which I find in an urn, a ſeal, a ſnuff-box, an engraving, or a buſt. Ambition, too, as it puts me upon wiſhing to make a figure, makes me very indifferent as to making a common every-day-gentlemanly figure; and ſaves me from appearing ſolicitous about the "res *mediocriter* ſplendidæ," by raiſing my

5 imagination

imagination *higher*. I pour out my vanity to you in cataracts; but I hope you will rather conſider it as a mark of my *confidence*, and, conſequently, my ſincere eſteem and affection: for, I take it, the former ſeldom ſubſiſts without the latter. And as to what I ſaid about my love of flattery, I hope, you will not conſtrue it as any *hint*; neither, if I am right, would you be ſo ungenerous as to comply with me. I ſincerely think that flattery amongſt foes is abſolutely deſirable; amongſt one's *common acquaintance*, a behaviour *rather inclining* to it: but amongſt *friends*, its conſequences are of too dangerous a nature.

I AM ſo unhappy in my wintery, unviſited ſtate, that I can almoſt ſay with Dido, "tædet cœli con-"vexa tueri." I am miſerable, to think that I have not thought enough to amuſe me. I walk a day together, and have no idea but what comes in at my eyes. I long for ſome ſubject about the ſize of Philips's Cyder, to ſettle heartily about; ſomething that I could enrich by epiſodes drawn from the Engliſh hiſtory: *Stonehenge* has ſome of the advantages I like; but ſeems a dead, lifeleſs title. If you chance to think of a ſubject which you do not chuſe to *adorn* yourſelf, ſend it me to *write upon*.

I SHALL be vaſtly deſirous to ſee you here in ſpring; and am in hopes Whiſtler will ſtay a month with

with me. I have ſent an imperious letter about his dilatory correſpondence.—He mentioned you in his laſt letter; was going to Oxford; thence to London: where, if he ſtays till February, I may ſee him. I hope you will write the very next poſt: you cannot oblige me or pleaſe me more than by ſo doing; if you think I deſerve to be pleaſed, or am worth obliging. Adieu!

W. S.

XXVII. To the ſame, from Town; with a Specimen of Plays and Politics.

From Mr. Shuckburgh's, Bookſeller, in Fleet-ſtreet, your Brother's Lodgings; about 1743.

Dear Mr. Graves,

I HAVE juſt been ſpending my evening at a coffee-houſe; and, notwithſtanding the confuſed effect of liquor, am ſitting down to write to a perſon of the cleareſt head I know. The *truth* is, I write to pleaſe *myſelf*, which I can do no other way ſo effectually; upon which account, you are not obliged to me for the *advances* I make in correſpondence. Extraordinary things will be expected from my *ſituation*; but extraordinary things ought never to be expected from *me*. I keep no political company, nor

desire any, as, I believe, you know. If you enquire after the ſtage,—I have not ſeen Garrick; but, more fortunately for *you*, your brother *has*. Me nothing has ſo much tranſported as young Cibber's *exhibition* of Parolles, in Shakeſpear's "*All's well that ends well.*" The character is admirably written by the author; and, I fancy, I can diſcover a great number of hints which it has afforded to Congreve in his Bluſh. I am apt to think a perſon, after he is twelve years old, laughs annually leſs and leſs: leſs heartily, however; which is much the ſame. I think Cibber elicited from me as ſincere a laugh as I can ever recollect. Nothing, ſure, can be comparable to his repreſentation of Parolles in his bully-character; except the figure he makes as a ſhabby gentleman. In his firſt dreſs he is tawdry, as you may imagine: in the laſt, he wears a rufty black coat, a black ſtock, a black wig with a Ramillie, a pair of black gloves; and a face!—which cauſes five minutes laughter.——Inſtead of politics, I have tranſcribed theſe epigrams from the Evening Poſt—though I hate tranſcribing:

"The CHOICE, to Sir ROBERT ——

"When oppoſition againſt power prevail'd;
"When artful eloquence and bribery fail'd;
"Timely you quit the ſhip you could not ſteer,
"Diſdain the commons, and aſcend a peer:

" Conſcious that you deſerve to *bleed* or *ſwing*,
" You chuſe the axe as nobler than the ſtring."

" The OPPOSITION.

" With huge Antæus as Alcides ſtrove,
" The ſon of Neptune one, and one of Jove,
" Oft as he threw the giant on the ground,
" His ſtrength redoubled by the fall he found.
" Th' unwieldy monſter, ſprung of mother Earth,
" From *her* had vigour, as from her he'd birth:
" Enrag'd, the hero a new method tries;
" High lifts in air, and, as he mounts, he dies."

I THINK the laſt a good thought; the firſt not a bad one, and what I have had in my head a thouſand times. I ſaw Mr. Fitzherbert at Nando's, but choſe not to reconnoitre him there, though to aſk after *you*. I purpoſe waiting on him at his lodgings for the ſame end. Pray write ſoon to me. I wiſh I could ſay more to deſerve it from you—I would fain deviate from the common road in every letter I ſend you; but am ſo very uniformly your friend, that I cannot vary my manner of expreſſing how *much* I am ſo, which is all my letters aim at. Adieu!

W. SHENSTONE.

XXVIII. To

XXVIII. To the ſame, with various Schemes of Compoſition.

Dear Mr. Graves, Feb. 1743.

YOU ſay it is no way unpleaſing to you to receive my letters; if you ſay the thing that is not, the fault, like others, produces its own puniſhment.—You are now my only correſpondent. I do not know what reaſon Whiſtler has for not caring to write, unleſs he thinks that we ought not to trouble ourſelves about one another, but bend our whole endeavours to mend our fortunes; though I do not *know* his imaginations. I was afraid, after what I had ſaid concerning *ſameneſs* in my laſt, that you would interpret it to your own diſadvantage; but was too lazy to write my letter again, truſting that I could deny the extent of my complaint to any one beſides myſelf in ſome future letter. There is as much variety in your genius, as fortune can introduce into your circumſtances.

SOME time next week, do I purpoſe to ſet out for London. The reaſons for my going at all do *barely* preponderate. I cannot, *conſcientiouſly*, print any thing. I have two or three little matters in hand: none that I am greatly fond of, much leſs that are at all mature. One is, what you have ſeen, though in its mortal ſtate, "Flattery, or the fatal Exotic;"

ſo very quotidian and copious a ſubject, that I diſlike it entirely. Another, "Elegies in Hammond's "Metre," but upon *real* and natural ſubjects: this I have objections to. A third, "An Eſſay on Re-"ſerve;" the ſubject genteel, I think, but ſcarce ten lines finiſhed. A fourth, "An Eſſay, in blank "Verſe, on Oeconomy, with Advice to Poets on "that Head, concluding with a ludicrous Deſcrip-"tion of a Poet's Apartment." I think it were better to *annex* that poem thus, to prevent its claſhing, like an earthen pot, againſt Philips's ſilver vaſe, though his humour lies chiefly in the language. My favourite ſcheme is a poem, in blank verſe, upon Rural *Elegance*, including caſcades, temples, grottos, hermitages, green-houſes, which introduces my favorite epiſode of the Spaniſh lady (you will wonder *how*, but I think *well*) to cloſe the firſt book. The next, running upon planting, &c. will end with a viſta terminated by an old abbey, which introduces an epiſode concerning the effects of Romiſh power, interdicts, &c. in imitation of Lucretius's "Plague of Athens," taken from Thucydides, Virgil's Murrain, and Ovid's Peſtilence, &c. The two epiſodes in great forwardneſs;—but, alas! I do not like formal didactic poetry, and ſhall never be able to finiſh aught *but* the epiſodes, I doubt: unleſs I allow myſelf to treat the reſt, in *my own* manner, tranſiently—as Camilla ſkimmed over the wheat-ſtubble.

I HAVE

I HAVE altered this ballad, you ſee; I doubt, not to your mind: but ſend your criticiſms, and I will be all obedience. From London I will ſend you mine on your more important poem: your critique will be important upon my ſilly affair; mine ſilly, I am afraid, upon your momentous one—but you do not think it momentous, as you ought. Direct to Nando's. I am

Your moſt ſincere and affectionate friend
and humble ſervant,

W. S.

I QUESTION whether I ſhould be more unhappy in any mere *mechanical* employment, for inſtance, making nails (which ſeems to deal as much in *repetition* as any trade), than I am in great part of my time when my head is unfit for ſtudy.—My neighbour is gone to London, and has left me a legacy of franks; ſo I ſhall be able to return your poem, &c. at leaſt by parcels. I ſtrenuouſly purpoſe to be there (or to ſet out) next week; but, as I *am* here at preſent, I think you ought to pay ſome deference to the *vis inertiæ*, at leaſt to the centripetal force of matter, and direct to The Leaſowes one more letter, with your opinion concerning the various readings in the trifle I incloſe, writing the firſt poſt that you well can.—Once more adieu!

Feb. 16, 1743.

XXIX. To the ſame.

Dear Mr. Graves, 1743.

DR. Swift would not have ſcrupled to print your parody, with his name to it. Why ſhould you, *without* your name? I had a violent inclination to print it in a large folio, four leaves, price fourpence: but I dare not do it, for fear you ſhould think it of evil importance with regard to the clergy. You excell me infinitely in a way in which I take moſt pleaſure; odd picturesque deſcription. Send me word whether I ſhall print it or no—and that right ſoon.—I have lingered in town till now, and did not receive your letter till this morning.—I do not know whether I ſhall ſend you with this letter a little thing which I wrote in an afternoon, and, with proper *demands* of being concealed as the author, ſold for two guineas. Next time I am in town, I will get money like a haberdaſher. I will amuſe myſelf with finding out the people's weak ſide, and ſo furniſh them with *ſuitable nonſenſe*.—I would have you do the ſame.—Make your wit bear your charges. Indeed, as to the little parody you ſend, it would fix your reputation with men of ſenſe as much as (greatly more than) the whole tedious character of Parſon Adams. I read it half a year ago; the week after I came to town: but made Mr. Shuckburgh take it again, imagining it altogether a very mean performance.

formance.—I liked a tenth part pretty well; but, as Dryden ſays of Horace (unjuſtly), he ſhews his teeth without laughing: the greater part is *unnatural* and *unhumorous*. It has ſome advocates; but, I obſerve, thoſe not ſuch as I ever eſteemed taſters. Finally, what makes *you endeavour* to like it?

My printer was preparing his bill for The School-miſtreſs, when I ſtopped him ſhort, with a hint to go to Dodſley, who has not yet reckoned with me for Hercules. Let *the dead* bury their *dead*. Dr. Young's Complaint is the beſt thing that has come out this ſeaſon (theſe *twenty years*, Pope ſays) except mine, for ſo *thinks* every author, who does not think proper to ſay ſo: poor Pope's hiſtory in Cibber's Letter, and the print of him upon the Mount of Love (the *coarſeſt* is moſt *humorous*), muſt ſurely mortify him. Your ſiſter does me great honour to think my hint any thing; but I am quite zealous in my approbation of that Scotch lady's hair. I will *ever* aim at *oddneſs* for the future; it is cheaper to follow taſte than faſhion, and whoever he be that devotes himſelf to *taſte* will be *odd* of courſe.—You ſend me the verſes on Lord Hay: they were hacked about town three months ago, and I ſaw them. The town is certainly the ſcene for a man of curioſity.—I do not purpoſe to be long away; but I muſt think of retrenching.—I have ten thouſand things to tell you, but I have not room. Such people as

we ſhould meet as regularly to compare notes as tradeſmen do to ſettle accounts, but oftener; there is no good comes of long reckonings;—I ſhall forget half—I think it ſhould be four days in a fortnight—it would not do;—it would make one *mindful* of, and conſequently more uneaſy on account of, abſence. Every one gets poſts, preferments, but myſelf.—Nothing but my ambition can ſet me on a footing with them, and make me eaſy. Come then, lordly pride; &c. The devil thought with me in Milton,

"*All* is not loſt, th' unconquerable will,
"And ſtudy never to ſubmit or yield."

I HAVE been in new companies; but I ſee no reaſon to contradict my aſſertion, that I find none I like *equally* with *you*. Adieu!

W. SHENSTONE.

XXX. To Mr. JAGO, from London.

Dear friend, 1743.

I SHALL ſend you but a very few lines, being ſo much indiſpoſed with a cold, that I can ſcarce tell how to connect a ſentence. I am juſt got into lodgings at a goldſmith's— a dangerous ſituation, you

you will ſay, for *me*; "Actum eſt, ilicet, periiſti!" Not ſo;—for of late I have not ſo violent a taſte for toys as I have had; and I can look even on ſnuff-boxes "oculo irretorto."

LONDON is really dangerous at this time; the pick-pockets, formerly content with mere *filching*, make no ſcruple to knock people down with bludgeons in *Fleet-ſtreet* and the *Strand*, and that at no later hour than eight o'clock at night: but in the Piazzas, Covent-garden, they come in large bodies, armed with couteaus, and attack whole parties, ſo that the danger of coming out of the play-houſes is of ſome weight in the oppoſite ſcale, when I am diſpoſed to go to them oftener than I ought.—There is a poem of this ſeaſon, called "The Pleaſures of Imagination," worth your reading; but it is an expenſive quarto; if it comes out in a leſs ſize, I will bring it home with me. Mr. Pope (as Mr. Outing, who has been with Lord Bolingbroke, informs me) is at the point of death.—My Lord Carteret ſaid yeſterday in the houſe, "That the French and Spaniards had "actually *ſaid*, they would attempt a ſecond in-"vaſion."—There is a new play acted at Drury Lane, "Mahomet," tranſlated from the French of Voltaire; but I have no great opinion of the ſubject, or the original author as a poet; and my diffidence is rather improved by the teſtimony of thoſe who have ſeen it.—I lodge between the two coffee-

houſes, George's and Nando's, ſo that I partake of the expenſiveneſs of both, as heretofore. I have no acquaintance in town, and but ſlender inducement to ſtay; and yet, probably, I ſhall loiter here for a month.

T— H— was knighted againſt his will, and had a demand made upon him for an hundred pounds before he could get out of St. James's; ſo ſoon are felt the inconveniencies of grandeur!—He came out of the court in a violent rage, "G—d! Jack, what "doſt think?—I am knighted!—the devil of a "knight, e'faith!" I believe he was ſincere in his diſguſt; for there had been two barge-maſters knighted in his neighbourhood ſome time before.

I saw, coming up, Lady Fane's grotto, which, they ſay, coſt her five thouſand pounds; about three times as much as her *houſe* is worth. It is a very beautiful diſpoſition of the fineſt collection of ſhells I ever ſaw—Mr. Powis's woods, which are finer.—Mean time, if I had three hundred pounds to lay out about The Leaſowes, I could bring my ambition to peaceable terms. I am, dear Sir, with all affection, yours and Mrs. Jago's.

W. Shenstone.

Write ſoon. It is this moment reported that Pope is dead.

XXXI. To

XXXI. To the ſame.

Dear Sir, 1743.

I LONG heartily to talk over affairs with you *tête à tête*; but am an utter enemy to the fatigue of tranſcribing what might paſs well enough in converſation.—I ſhall ſay nothing more concerning my departure from L—, than that it was neceſſary, and therefore excuſable.—I have been ſince with a gentleman upon the borders of Wales, Biſhop's Caſtle, from whence I made a digreſſion one day beyond Offa's Dyke: ſaw mountains which converted all that I *had* ſeen into mole-hills; and houſes which changed The Leaſowes into Hampton Court: where they talk of a glazed window as a piece of magnificence; and where their higheſt idea of his Majeſty is, that he can ride in ſuch a coach as 'Squire Jones or 'Squire Pryce's. The woman of the inn, at one place, ſaid, "Glaſs (in windows) was very "genteel, that it was; but ſhe could not afford ſuch "finery."

You agree with the reſt of the married world in a propenſity to make proſelytes. This inclination in ſome people gives one a kind of dread of the matter. They are ill-natured, and can only wiſh one in their own ſtate becauſe they are unhappy; like perſons that have the plague, who, they ſay, are ever

deſirous to propagate the infection. I make a contrary concluſion when *you* commend marriage, as you ſeem to do, when you wiſh Miſs — may reconcile me to more than the *name* of wife. I know not what you have heard of my amour: probably *more* than I can thoroughly confirm to you. And what if I ſhould ſay to you, that marriage was not once the ſubject of our converſation?

——"Nec conjugis unquam
"Prætendi tædas, aut hæc in fœdera veni."

Do not you think every thing in nature ſtrangely improved ſince you were married, from the tea-table to the *warming-pan*?

I WANT to ſee Mrs. Jago's hand-writing, that I may judge of her temper; but ſhe muſt write ſomething in my praiſe. Pray ſee you to it, in your next letter.

I COULD parodize my Lord Carteret's letter from Dettingen, if I had it by me. "Mrs. Arnold (thanks "be praiſed!) has this day gained a very conſidera-"ble victory. The ſcold laſted two hours. Mrs. "S—e was poſted in the hall, and Mrs. Arnold upon "the ſtair-caſe; which ſuperiority of ground was of "no ſmall ſervice to her in the engagement. The "fire laſted the whole ſpace, without intermiſſion;

"at

" at the close of which, the enemy was routed, and " Mrs. Arnold kept the field."

DID you hear the song to the tune of " The " Cuckow?"

" The Baron stood behind a tree,
" In woeful plight, for nought heard he
" But Cannon, Cannon, &c.
" O word of fear!
" Unpleasing to a German ear."

The notes that fall upon the word " Cannon" express the sound with its echo admirably.

I SEND you my pastoral elegy (or ballad, if you think that name more proper), on condition that you return it with ample remarks in your next letter: I say " return it," because I have no other copy, and am too indolent to take one. Adieu!

W. S.

XXXII. To

XXXII. To Mr. GRAVES, describing his Situation, and State of Health, &c.

Dear Mr. Graves, The Leasowes.

TO-MORROW morning I set out for Cheltenham, to make trial of the waters there. I shall, perhaps, add to this letter at several stages, and conclude it at the place to which I am going; so that, like those springs, you may, perhaps, find it impregnated with the nature of all those places through which it passes; perhaps quite the contrary.

——, if I mistake not the man, is an encourager of works of taste, &c. though I am going to instance this oddly: he was a hearty stickler for my poem upon Hercules at Bath, as D. Jago sent me word. Perhaps it was complaisance to Mr. Lyttelton, with whom, Charles, &c. he is intimate, if, as I said before, I do not mistake the person. I flatter myself, I do not; and I hope that we two shall ever find the same persons, or the same kind of persons, our friends, and also our enemies.

If I get over this ill habit of body, depend upon it, I *will* have a *reverend* care o. my health, as Sir John Falstaff advises the Chief Justice. I solve all the tempests that disturb my constitution into *wind:*

wind: it plagues me, firſt, in the ſhape of a bad appetite, then indigeſtion, then lowneſs of ſpirits and a flux of pale water, and at night by watchings, reſtleſſneſs, twitchings of my nerves, or a ſleep more diſtracted than the moſt active ſtate of watchfulneſs. But I think purging leſſens all theſe ſymptoms, and I truſt my ſcheme that I am entering upon is right.

I WAS on Monday at Hagley, to wait on Mr. Lyttelton, who was gone to Sir John Aſtley's, to ſee his grand edifice.—As to Mrs. Lyttelton, if her affability is not artificial, I mean, if it does not owe its original (as it *ought to do* its *management*) to art, I cannot conceive a perſon more amiable;—but *ſenſe* and *elegance* cannot be feigned: to *exhibit* them, is to *have* them.

How is my ſong ſet? Miſs Carrington procured it that favour; but I have never ſeen a copy, nor knew of its being to be printed. Howard has ſet another of mine, which I received laſt poſt; but my harpſichord is out of order, and I have found no one yet to explain the hieroglyphics which convey it. You may probably find it in ſome future number of the Britiſh Orpheus. "By the ſide of a ſtream, &c."

I AM in as good ſpirits this inſtant as ever I was in my life: only "Mens turbidum lætatur." My head is a little confuſed; but I often think ſeriouſly, that

that I ought to have the moſt ardent and *practical* gratitude (as the Methodiſts chuſe to expreſs themſelves) for the advantages that I have: which, though not eminently ſhining, are ſuch, to ſpeak the truth, as ſuit my particular humour, and conſequently deſerve all kind of acknowledgement. If a poet ſhould addreſs himſelf to God Almighty, with the moſt earneſt thanks for his goodneſs in allotting him an eſtate that was over-run with ſhrubs, thickets, and coppices, variegated with barren rocks and precipices, or floated three parts in four with lakes and marſhes, rather than ſuch an equal and fertile ſpot as the "ſons of men" delight in; to my apprehenſion, he would be guilty of no abſurdity.—But of this I have compoſed a kind of prayer, and intend to write a little ſpeculation on the ſubject; this kind of gratitude I aſſuredly ought to have, and have. For my health, if one reflects, a country-fellow's flock of it would be unfit for ſolitude; would diſpoſe one rather to bodily ſeats, and, what Falſtaff calls in Poins, *gambol* faculties, than mental contemplations; and would give one that kind of pain which ſprings from *impatience*. My conſtitution was given me originally good; and with regard to it now (as G. Barnwell ſays) "What am I?—What "*I have made myſelf.*" Or, to ſpeak with Milton,

"Him

"Him after all disputes
"Forc'd I absolve: all my evasions vain,
"And reasonings, tho' thro' mazes, only lead
"But to my own conviction. First and last
"On me, me only, as the source and spring
"Of all corruption, all the blame lights due."

Though this is but vulgarly expressed in Milton neither.

JAGO has been here this last week, and I drove him to Dudley Castle, which I long to shew you: I never saw it (since I was the size of my pen) before: it has great romantic beauty, though perhaps Derbyshire may render it of small note in your eye.

ONE is tempted to address the K— as Harry the Eighth does his wife, *mutatis mutandis*:

"Go thy ways, George!
"Whoe'er he be that shall assert he has
"A *bolder* king, let him in nought be trusted
"For saying false in that——"

I HAVE a mind to write an ode in praise of him, and in rivalship of Cibber.—Mine should be of the ballad style and familiarity, as expressing the sentiments of a person returning from a dislike to a thorough approbation of him, which seems, at pre-

ſent, the ſenſe of the nation.—But herein I am not in earneſt.—

My pen has run on a whole page at random. It amuſes me to encourage it, and ſo I will try to get a frank.

I am this moment arrived at Cheltenham, after an expenſive and fatiguing journey. I called yeſterday at Mickleton; ſaw the portico, and ſnapped up a bit of mutton at your brother's; drank a diſh of tea with Miſs S—; and, in oppoſition to the ſtrongeſt remonſtrances, perſiſted in an endeavour to reach Cheltenham after five o'clock. The conſequence was, that, about ten, I found myſelf travelling back again towards Stowe; and had undoubtedly wandered all night in the dark, had I not been fortunately met by a waggoner's ſervant, who brought me back to the worſt *inn* but one I ever lay at, being his maſter's.—Here I am: which is all I ſhall ſay in this letter.

Adieu!

W. S.

XXXIII. To Mr. JAGO, on the ſame.

The Leaſowes, Saturday,
Dear Mr. Jago, July the 9th, 1743.

IT is not a contrived apology, or an excuſe, which I am going to offer for the diſappointments I have given you. I have actually been ſo much out of order ever ſince I wrote to you, nay, ever ſince I *formed a deſign* of a Sunday expedition to L——, that it never has been in my *power* to execute my intentions. My vertigo has not *yet* taken away my ſenſes: God knows how ſoon it may do; but my nerves are in ſuch a condition, that I can ſcarce get a wink of even *diſordered* reſt for whole nights together. May you never know the miſery of ſuch involuntary vigils? I ride every day almoſt to fatigue; which only tends to make my want of ſleep more *ſenſible*, and not in the leaſt to remove it. I have *ſpirits* all day, good ones; though my head is dizzy, and I never enterprize any ſtudy of greater ſubtlety than a news-paper. I cannot ſay the journey to L—— would be at all *formidable* to me; for I ride about fifteen miles, as I compute it, every day before dinner. But the nights from home would be inſupportable to me. I have fatigued Mrs. Arnold's aſſiduity, to the injury of her health; by occaſioning her to ſit in my room a'nights, light my candle, put it out again, make me perſpiratory

wheys, and ſlops; and am amuſed by the moſt ſilly animadverſions ſhe is capable of making. I never knew her uſefulneſs till now; but I *now* prefer her to *all* of *her ſtation*. If I get over this diſorder, concerning which I have bad apprehenſions, you may depend upon ſeeing me the firſt Sunday I dare venture forth. I hope *you* continue mending. The benefit of *riding* is only not univerſal, and would cure *me* too, could I but make one previous advance towards health. Have you tried cold-bathing? Perhaps it may not ſuit your caſe. I wiſh I had not dropt it. I take my fluctuation of nerves to be cauſed, as that of the ſea is, by wind; which I am continually pumping up, and yet find it ſtill renewed. When I am juſt ſinking to ſleep, a ſudden twitch of my nerves calls me back again—to watchfulneſs and vexation! I conſider myſelf as in the ſtate of the philoſopher, who held a bullet betwixt his finger and thumb, which, whenever he was about to nod, was ordered ſo as to fall into a large braſs pan, and wake him—that he might purſue his lucubrations.

I WILL mention one circumſtance regarding the weakneſs of my nerves;—and not my ſpirits, for I told you thoſe were tolerable:—the leaſt noiſe that is, even the falling of a fire-ſhovel upon the floor, if it happen unexpectedly, ſhocks my whole frame; and I actually believe that a gun fired behind my back,

back, unawares, amidſt the ſtillneſs of the night, would go near to kill me with its noiſe.

I AM juſt going to bed; and dare not be any more attentive, as I hope to cloſe my eyes for a minute. So fare you well!

IT is now ſix o'clock in the morning, and I have had about five hours middling ſleep; which encourages me greatly: ſo I will *hope* to be able to ſee you next Sunday ſevennight.

WHAT think you of the battle? Are not you ſo much in love with our King, that you could find in your heart to ſerve him in any profitable poſt he might aſſign you?

CAPT. L——— is wounded in the thigh.

WHEN I ride in my chair round my neighbourhood, I am as much ſtared and wondered at, as a giant would be that ſhould walk through Pall-mall. My vehicle is at *leaſt as* uncommon hereabouts as a blazing comet. My chief pleaſure lies in finding out a thouſand roads, and delightful little haunts near home, which I never dreamt of: egregious ſolitudes, and moſt incomparable bye-lanes; where I can as effectually loſe myſelf within a mile of home, as if I were benighted in the deſarts of Arabia. Adieu!

XXXIV. To Mr. GRAVES, written in Hay-Harveſt.

Dear Mr. Graves, July 3, 1743.

I DID not part from you without a *great deal* of melancholy. To think of the *ſhort* duration of thoſe interviews which are the objects of one's *continual* wiſhes, has been a reflection that has plagued me of old! I am ſure I returned home with it then, more aggravated, as I foreſaw myſelf returning to the ſame ſeries of melancholy hours from which you had a while relieved me, and which I had *particularly* ſuffered under all this laſt ſpring! I wiſh to God, you might happen to be ſettled not far from me: a day's journey diſtance, however; I mean, an *eaſy* one. But the odds are infinitely againſt me. I muſt only *rely* for my happineſs on the hopes of a never-ceaſing correſpondence!

SOON after you were gone, I received my packet. The hiſtory of Worceſterſhire is mere ſtuff. T—— I am ſo fond of, that, I believe, I ſhall have his part of the collection bound over again, neatly and ſeparately. But ſure Hammond has no right to the leaſt *inventive* merit, as the preface-writer would inſinuate. I do not think there is a ſingle thought, of any eminence, that is not literally tranſlated. I am aſtoniſhed he could content himſelf with being ſo little an original.

MR.

Mr Lyttelton and his lady are at Hagley. A malignant caterpillar has demoliſhed the beauty of all our *large* oaks. Mine are ſecured by their littleneſs. But, I gueſs, the park ſuffers; a large wood near me being a mere winter piece for nakedneſs.

At preſent, I give myſelf up to riding and thoughtleſſneſs; being reſolved to make trial of *their* efficacy towards a tolerable degree of health and ſpirits. I wiſh I had you for my director. I ſhould proceed with great confidence of ſucceſs; though I am brought very low by two or three fits of a fever ſince I ſaw you. Had I written to you in the midſt of my diſpirited condition, as I was going, you would have had a more tender and unaffected letter than I *can* write at another time: what I think, perhaps, at all times; but what ſickneſs can alone elicit from a temper fearful of whining.

Surely the "nunc formoſiſſimus annus" is to be limited to hay-harveſt. I could give my reaſons: but you will imagine them to be, the activity of country people in a pleaſing employment; the full verdure of the ſummer; the prime of pinks, woodbines, jaſmines, &c. I am old; very old; for few things give me ſo much mechanical pleaſure as lolling on a bank in the very heat of the ſun,

"When the old come forth to play
"On a ſun-ſhine holiday—"

And yet it is as much as I can do to keep Mrs. Arnold from going to neighbouring houſes in her ſmock, in deſpite of decency and my known diſapprobation.

I FIND myſelf more of a patriot than I ever thought I was. Upon reading the account of the battle, I found a very ſenſible pleaſure, or, as the Methodiſts term it, perceived my heart *enlarged*, &c. The map you ſent me is a pretty kind of *toy*, but does not enough particularize the ſcenes of the war, &c. which was the end I had in view when I ſent for it.

"O DURA meſſorum ilia!" About half the appetite, digeſtion, ſtrength, ſpirits, &c. of a mower, would make me the happieſt of mortals! I would be underſtood literally, and preciſely.

Adieu!

W. S.

XXXV. To the ſame, after the Diſappointment of a Viſit.

Dear Sir, 1743.

I AM tempted to begin my letter as Memmius does his harangue. "Multa me dehortantur à "vobis, ni ſtudium virtutis veſtræ omnia exſuperet." —You contrive interviews of about a minute's du-

ration; and you make appointments in order to diſappoint one; and yet, at the ſame time that your proceedings are thus vexatious, force one to bear teſtimony to the ineſtimable value of your friendſhip! I do inſiſt upon it, that you ought to compound for the diſappointment you have cauſed me, by a little letter every poſt you ſtay in town. I ſhall now ſcarce ſee you till next ſummer, or ſpring at ſooneſt; and then I may probably take occaſion to viſit you, under pretence of ſeeing Derbyſhire. Truth is, your prints have given me *ſome* curioſity to ſee the original places. I am grateful for your intentions with regard to giving me part of them, and impertinent in deſiring you to convey them to me as ſoon as you can well ſpare them. Let me know if they are ſold ſeparately at the print-ſhops. I think to recommend them to my new acquaintance, Mr. Lyttelton Brown. I like the humour of the ballad you mention, but am more obliged for your partial opinion of me. The notes that fall upon the word "Cannon, Cannon," are admirably expreſſive of the ſound, I dare ſay: I mean, jointly with its echo; and ſo, I ſuppoſe, you will think, if you ever attended to the Tower-guns. I find I cannot afford to go to Bath previouſly to my London-journey; though I look upon it as a proper method to make my reſidence in town more agreeable. I ſhall, probably, be there about the firſt of December; or before, if I can accelerate my friend Whiſtler's journey.

The

The pen I write with is the moſt diſagreeable of pens! But I have little elſe to ſay; only this—that our good friend Jack Dolman is dead at Aldridge, his father's benefice.

I BEG, if you have leiſure, you would incloſe me in a frank the following ſongs, with the notes: "Stella and Flavia," "Gentle Jeſſy," "Sylvia, wilt "thou waſte thy prime?" and any other that is new. I ſhould be glad of that number of the Britiſh Orpheus which has my ſong in it, if it does not coſt above ſix-pence. Make my compliments to your brother and ſiſter; and believe me, in the common forms, but in no common degree,

Dear Mr. Graves's

Moſt affectionate friend and ſervant,

The Leaſowes, Nov. 9th, 1743. W. SHENSTONE.

Do write out the whole ballad of "The Baron ſtood "behind a tree."

XXXVI. To

XXXVI. To the ſame, on the Receipt of a Preſent of Prints.

Dear Sir, The Leaſowes, Dec. 23, 1743.

YOU may reaſonably have expected a letter before now, either as an acknowledgement for your genteel preſent, or at leaſt by way of information that I had received it. The prints have given me a pleaſure, which, however conſiderable, would ſoon have languiſhed, if I had bought them at a ſhop; but which is now built upon the eſteem I have for the giver, and cannot have a more durable foundation.—As for the reſt, I am moſt pleaſed with the view of Matlock, and ſhall have no peace of mind till I have ſeen the original. I have been gilding the frames, and wiſhing all the while for your company.

I WILL alter the ballad according to your advice; dividing it into three parts, and adding a ſtanza or two to the ſhorteſt, ſome time or other. I have had no opportunity of trying the tunes. "*Arno's vale*" has pretty words, and recommends itſelf to one's imagination by the probability that it was written on a real occaſion—the ſimilitude of rhimes in the cloſe inexcuſable. For all that has been the ſubject of my letter hitherto, as the country people ſay, I

can

can but thank you, and I do very ſincerely; though as to the ſongs I will re-pay you.

I HAVE your poem by me, which I have read often with the greateſt pleaſure. I have many obſervations to make; and only defer the communication till I know whether you have a copy at Tiſſington to turn to. I think, the moſt *polite* and *ſuitable* title to it would run thus: "The Villa, a Poem; containing a "Sketch of the preſent Taſte in Rural Embelliſh-"ments, written in 1740." Your preface has a pretty thought towards the cloſe; otherwiſe is on no account to be admitted. Pardon my freedom; but, I think, there is no manner of occaſion for a preface; and thoſe ſtrokes, which I *know* to be real modeſty in *you*, the world will undoubtedly impute to affectation. —If you give me encouragement, I will be very minute in my criticiſms, allowing you to reject ten to one that you admit of.

WHISTLER is gone to Briſtol, and has bilked me. —I ſaid, he is gone; but, I believe, he is only upon going —I linger at home, in hopes of gleaning up a little health, and through a dread of being ill in a place where I can be leſs attended on.—I can continually *find out* ſomething in my preceding diet that, I *think*, diſorders me; ſo that I am conſtantly in hopes of growing well:—but, perhaps, I never ſhall:

"Optima

" Optima quæque dies miſeris mortalibus ævi
" *Prima* fugit, ſubeunt morbi ——"

WHEN I was a ſchool-boy, I never knew there *was any ſuch thing* as perſpiration; and now, half my time is taken up in conſidering the immediate connexion betwixt that and health, and endeavouring to promote it.

MR. Lyttelton has built a kind of alcove in his park, inſcribed, " SEDES CONTEMPLATIONIS," near his hermitage. Under the aforeſaid inſcription is " OMNIA VANITAS :"—the ſides ornamented with ſheeps-bones, jaws, ſculls, &c. feſtoon-wiſe. In a nitch over it, an owl.

As to ſchemes, I have none with regard to the world, women, or books. And I hate, and have deferred writing to you (for ſome days) for that reaſon. I am ſick of exhibiting ſo much fameneſs:—I am conſtantly poring over ſome Claſſic, which I conſider as one of Idleneſs's better ſhapes. But I am impatient to be doing ſomething that may tend to better my ſituation in ſome reſpect or other. It is *encouragement* can alone inſpire one.

—— " Multa & præclare minantem
" Vivere nec *recte*, nec *ſuaviter* ——"

expreſſes the whole of me. Thus my epiſtles perſevere in the plaintive ſtyle; and I queſtion whether the

the ſight of them does not, ere now, give you the vapours. I have an old aunt that viſits me ſometimes, whoſe converſation is the perfect counterpart of them. She ſhall fetch a long-winded ſigh with Dr. Young for a wager; though I ſee *his* Suſpiria are not yet finiſhed. He has *relapſed* into "Night "the Fifth." I take his caſe to be wind in a great meaſure, and would adviſe him to take rhubarb in powder, with a little nutmeg grated amongſt it, as I do.

DEAR Mr. G—, write down to me; and believe me to be, invariably,

Your moſt ſincere

and obliged friend, &c.

W. SHENSTONE.

XXXVII. To the ſame, with Obſervations on Hypocriſy, &c.

Dear Sir, 1743.

YOU muſt know, my laſt letter to you was written before I received yours from Tiſſington; and I ſhould take ſhame upon myſelf for not anſwering it, were I not furniſhed with this excuſe—that I waited for a frank for you.—There are but few things

things I have to say to you, and such as are not worth transcribing; yet, as our distance from one another requires it, I will scrawl them over as negligently as I can, to let you see I lay no stress upon them. A good excuse for laziness! you will say: and lazy enough I am, God knows!—I believe, any one who knows me thoroughly will think, that there never was so great an inconsistence as there is between my words (in my poem) and my actions.—This is what the world calls hypocrisy, and is determined to look upon with *peculiar* aversion. But, I think, the hypocrite is a *half*-good character. A man certainly, considering the force of precedent, deserves some praise who keeps up appearances; and is, no doubt, as much to be commended for talking better than he acts, as he is to be blamed for acting worse than he talks. So much for casuistry. I would seem, you must know, to have some meritorious views in talking *virtuously*; but who does not know that every one who writes poetry looks directly with his face towards praise, and whatever else his eye takes in is viewed obliquely? Praise, as I said to foible-confessing W—, is the desired, the noted, and the adequate reward of poetry; in which sort he that rewards me, Heaven reward him, as Sir John Falstaff says. There is something very vain in repeating my own sayings; but I could not conscientiously use a joke to you which I had used in another letter, without owning it.—In short, it is necessary to

have ſome *earthly* aim in view; the next world, whether it be in reality near or far off, is always *ſeen* at a diſtance. All that the generality of young people can do is, to act *conſiſtently with* their expectations there. Now, though fame, &c. be obviouſly enough in the eye of reaſon diſſatisfactory; yet it is proper enough to ſuffer one's ſelf to be deluded with the hopes of it, that is, it is proper to cheriſh ſome worldly hopes, that one may avoid impatience, ſpleen, and one ſort of *deſpair*: I mean that of having no *hopes* here, becauſe one ſees nothing here that deſerves them. If I were in your caſe, I would make all the efforts I was able towards being a Biſhop. That ſhould be my earthly aim: not but I would act with ſo much indifference as to bear all diſappointment unconcernedly—as, I dare ſay, you will.—There is but one paſſion that I put upon an equally ſprightly footing with ambition, and that is love; which, as it *regularly tends* to matrimony, requires certain favours from fortune and circumſtance to render it proper to indulge in.—By this time you think me crazed—as it often happens to me to doubt, *ſeriouſly*, whether I am not: but if it be the "mentis gratiſſimus error," I do not mind. You are very obliging to endeavour to continue my madneſs and vanity.—I ſhould be as glad to ſee Mr. Graves your brother as any one I know: I live in a manner wherein he would find many things to exerciſe his good-nature.

PAMELA

PAMELA would have made one good volume: and I wonder the author, who has ſome *nice* natural ſtrokes, ſhould not have ſenſe enough to ſee that.—I beg you will collect all the hints, &c. of your own, or others, that you think may tend to the improvement of my poem, againſt winter; that you would mention any flat lines, &c. Write me word ſome time ere you come over; but write to me immediately. I am

Yours faithfully,

W. SHENSTONE.

XXXVIII. To a Friend, with a Parody.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Sir, March 1, 1743-4.

YOU are upon very *good* terms with me, and *have* been all along. I gueſſed the cauſes of your ſilence, and have been ſincerely ſorry for them; not however that I did not believe you were more happy than any one in the world who is neither a lover nor a poet, though not able to turn himſelf for money-bags.—I am really going to London; and am about the purchaſe of an elegant pair of piſtols, from Birmingham. I indulge myſelf in this expence, becauſe they ſhall ſerve in two capacities; one while

to garniſh my chair, another while my horſe. And ſome time next week you will probably ſee your old friend on horſe-back, armed *at all points*, and as very a knight to all *appearance* as any body.

——"*Well! they ſay the Owl was a Quaker's Daugh-*
"*ter—one knows what one is, but one does not know*
"*what one* SHALL *be.*" Ophelia in Hamlet.

But I digreſs. If I juſt call to ſee you, God forbid that I ſhould be burthenſome to you. I will ſend my horſes to H—, and lodge there, or ſomewhere. But I am perfectly impatient to unboſom my ſoul to you, and to ſee Mrs. Jago, whom I ſhould have mentioned firſt. Wedneſday or Tueſday indeed ſeems the moſt likely day.—Though I am not ſure; nor do you confine yourſelf.

Poor Mariett! *I* too am emaciated; but I hope, by means of ſome warm weather, to acquire *plus d'embonpoint*. I deſign to call upon him, and keep him in countenance.

My ballad, in the midſt of your hurry, muſt appear as ridiculous as Cinna the poet does, when he ſwears nothing but death ſhall reſtrain him from addreſſing Brutus and Caſſius (and that the night before the battle) with two doggrel verſes—and thoſe the worſt I have ever read; and that makes the ſimile the

the more juſt. It is now a good deal metamorphoſed. Your parody is prodigiouſly droll: the firſt line delights me! I think I could furniſh Mrs. K—— with as good mottoes, and as cheap, though I ſay it, as any-body; but, alas!— Did I ſend you the following parody or no, before? I believe not. *Le voila!*

"When firſt, Philander, firſt I came
"Where Avon rolls his winding ſtream,
"The nymphs—how briſk! the ſwains—how gay!
"To ſee *Aſteria*, Queen of May!——
"The parſons round, her praiſes ſung!
"The ſteeples, with her praiſes rung!—
"I thought—no ſight, that e'er was ſeen,
"Could match the ſight of Barel's-green!——

"But *now*, ſince old *Eugenio* dy'd—
"The chief of poets, and the pride—
"Now, meaner bards in vain aſpire
"To raiſe their voice, to tune their lyre!
"Their lovely ſeaſon, now, is o'er!
"Thy notes, Florelio, pleaſe no more!—
"No more Aſteria's ſmiles are ſeen!——
"Adieu!—the ſweets of Barel's-green!——"

It is a kind of extempore, ſo excuſe it.—You have ſeen the ſong of Arno's Vale.

I am taking part of my farm upon my hands, to see if I can ſucceed as a farmer;—but I am afraid I am under the ſentence, "And, behold, whatſoever he "taketh in hand, it ſhall *not* proſper."

My good friend, I ſincerely confide, that, however we may be ſeparated, no time ſhall extenuate our mutual friendſhip. I am

Your zealous, unſerviceable friend,

W. SHENSTONE.

XXXIX. To Mr. GRAVES, on Social Happineſs.

Dear Mr. Graves, About 1745.

THERE is not a ſyllable you tell me concerning yourſelf in your laſt letter, but what applied to *me* is moſt literally true. I am ſenſible of the daily progreſs I make towards inſignificancy, and it will not be many years before you ſee me arrived at the *ne plus ultra*. I believe it is abſolutely impoſſible for me to acquire a conſiderable degree of knowledge, though I can underſtand things well enough at the time I read them. I remember a preacher at St. Mary's (I think it was Mr. E—) made a notable diſtinction betwixt *apprehenſion* and

 comprehenſion.

comprehension. If there be a real difference, probably it may find a place in the explication of my genius. I envy you a good *general* inſight into the writings of the learned. I muſt aim at nothing higher than a well-concealed ignorance.—I was thinking, upon reading your letter, *when* it was that you and Mr. Whiſtler and I went out of the road of happineſs. It certainly was where we firſt deviated from the turnpike-road of life. Wives, children, alliances, viſits, &c, are neceſſary objects of our ſocial paſſions; and whether or no we can, through particular circumſtances, be happy *with*, I think it plain enough that it is not poſſible to be happy *without* them. All attachments to inanimate beauties, to curioſities, and ornaments, ſatiate us preſently.—The fanciful tribe has the diſadvantage to be naturally prone to err in the choice of *laſting* pleaſures: and when our paſſions have habitually wandered, it is too difficult to reduce them into their proper chanels. When this is the caſe, nothing but the change or variety of amuſements ſtands any chance to make us eaſy, and it is not long ere the whole ſpecies is exhauſted. I agree with you entirely in the neceſſity of a *ſociable* life in order to be happy: I do not think it much a paradox, that any company is better than *none*. I think it obvious enough as to the preſent hour; and as to any future influence, ſolitude has exceeding ſavage effects on our diſpoſitions.—I have wrote out my elegy: I lay no ſtan-

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ner of ſtreſs but upon the piety of it.—Would not be a good kind of motto, applied to a p[illegible] you know, that might be taken from what is ſ[illegible] *Ophelia* in *Hamlet*,

"I tell thee, faithleſs prieſt!
"A miniſtring angel ſhall Ophelia be
"When thou art howling."

I HAVE amuſed myſelf often with this ſpecies of writing ſince you ſaw me; partly to divert my preſent *impatience*, and partly as it will be a picture of moſt that paſſes in my mind; a portrait which *friends* may value.—I ſhould be glad of your profile: if you have objections, I drop my requeſt.—I ſhould be heartily glad if you would come and live with me, for any ſpace of time that you could find convenient. But I will depend on your coming over with Mr. Whiſtler in the ſpring. I may poſſibly take a jaunt towards you ere long: the road would furniſh me out ſome viſits; and, by the time I reached you, perhaps, afford me a kind of climax of happineſs. If I do not, I ſhall perhaps be a little time at Bath. I do not ſpeak of this laſt as a ſcheme from which I entertain great expectations of pleaſure. It is long ſince I have conſidered myſelf as *undone*. The *world* will not perhaps conſider me in that light entirely, till I have married my maid. Adieu!

XL. To

I. To the ſame, with Obſervations on the Rebellion, and its probable Conſequences.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, Nov. 22, 1745.

MY life, for aught I ſee, will paſs away juſt as it *has* done, without introducing ſufficient improvement into my circumſtances to give a chearful caſt to my correſpondence. In *one* reſpect, in regard to my inviolable friendſhip for *you*, I hope you will hear with ſome ſatisfaction that I continue ſtill the ſame. And this kind of *identity*, I think, I could promiſe you, though every circumſtance in my fortune, every particle of my body, were changed; and others, ever ſo heterogeneous, ſubſtituted in their place. After this, it would be no compliment to ſay, that the *pretended* heir to theſe kingdoms could not alter it, were he to ſubvert the Britiſh conſtitution; which muſt, out of all doubt, be the conſequence of his ſucceſs. The rebellion, you may gueſs, is the ſubject of all converſation. Every individual nailer here takes in a news-paper (a more *pregnant* one by far than any of the London ones), and talks as familiarly of *kings* and *princes* as ever Maſter Shallow did of John of Gaunt. Indeed it is no bad thing that they do ſo; for I cannot conceive that the people want ſo much to be convinced by *ſermons* of the abſurdities of *popery*, as they do by

news-papers that *it* may *possibly* prevail. The reasons and arguments too in favour of the present Government are so *strong* and *obvious*, that every and every country 'squire, and every country clerk, and Sam Shaw the taylor, seem to be as much masters of them as the Bishops themselves. I must not say we could express them so politely.—I like Secker's the best of any sermon on this occasion. He gives his audience a view of such evil consequences from a *change*, as no man of sense can possibly doubt of, when fairly stated: and, I own, I cannot see one single *good* it could produce, in compensation for its inevitable and abundant *mischiefs*.—I have read Dr. Sherlock's sermon on this occasion: and I have read Mr. Warburton's; and, at your request, I will read his Legation.

I HAVE often thoughts of a jaunt as far as your country this winter. Some kind of pilgrimage I must make, to avoid a lethargy.—Public places I want to visit a little; to peep at and renew my idea of the *world's* vanity; but either Bath or London would steep me so far in poverty, that I should not probably emerge before the middle of next summer. I have spent this last summer agreeably enough with some of my young relations, Mr. Dolman's children.—They have an excellent taste for their years.—I have been upon several jaunts with the son to Litchfield, Worcester, Mr. Fletcher's, &c. amusing him,

him, what I could, under the loſs of his father. Miſs W—F—aſked very earneſtly after you. Two of the ſiſters have been with me at The Leaſowes, and upon ſeveral parties of pleaſure in my chair.—Broom is diſpoſed of—I do not underſtand upon what inducement.—After all, I am miſerable;—conſcious to myſelf that I am too little ſelfiſh; that I ought now or never to aim at ſome addition to my fortune; and that I make large advances towards the common cataſtrophe of *better* poets, poverty.—I never can attend enough to ſome twelvepenny matter, on which a great deal depends.—My amour, ſo far as I indulge it, gives me ſome pleaſure, and no pain in the world.—I have read Spenſer once again: and I have added full as much more to my *School-miſtreſs*, in regard to *number of lines*; *ſomething* in point of *matter* (or *manner* rather) *which* does not diſpleaſe me. I would be glad if Mr. —— were, upon your requeſt, to give his opinion of particulars, for two reaſons; as you ſay he has ſome taſte for this kind of writing, and as he is my enemy, and would, therefore, find out its deficiencies.

I HAVE a reaſon, of a moſt whimſical kind, why I would wiſh you to preſerve this letter. Pray write ſoon, and believe me moſt affectionately

Your friend and humble ſervant,

W. SHENSTONE.

XLI. To

XLI. To the ſame, with Remarks on the Execution and Behaviour of the Lords Kilmarnock and Balmerino.

Dear Mr. Graves, 1746, ineunte anno.

I BELIEVE it is impoſſible for me to diſagree with you on any other ſcore, than the ſcanty pittances you allot me of your company; and, if I have diſcloſed any ſymptoms of reſentment on that account, you will, perhaps, overlook them, out of regard to the motive from which they proceeded.—I thank you for your peruſal of that trivial poem. If I were going to print it, I ſhould give way to your remarks *implicitly*, and would not *dare* to do otherwiſe. But ſo long as I keep it in manuſcript, you will pardon my ſilly prejudices, if I chuſe to read and ſhew it with the addition of moſt of my new ſtanzas. I own, I have a fondneſs for ſeveral, imagining them to be *more* in Spenſer's way, yet more independent on the antique phraſe, than any part of the poem; and, on that account, I cannot yet prevail on myſelf to baniſh *them* entirely; but were I to print, I ſhould (with *ſome* reluctance) give way to your ſentiments (which I know are juſt), namely, that they render the work too diffuſe and ſlimzy, and form rather excreſcences than eſſential parts of it.

But

But of theſe things I ſay no more now. I purpoſe ſtaying a month with Mr. Whiſtler in December, if it ſuits him; and then I hope I ſhall have a great deal of your company. Let me hear ſomething in your next of your *domeſtic affairs*. I beg you would not make any grand deciſion, without giving me ſome previous information. I eſteem this as due to the friendſhip I have ſo long profeſſed for you, and from the friendſhip you have ſo long profeſſed for me.

I look upon the death of the two Lords as equally decent upon their reſpective principles. Lord Kilmarnock, I ſuppoſe, joined the rebels through a view of bettering his circumſtances, conſcious to himſelf that he was guilty of a crime the moment he did ſo. This is agreeable to his ſpeech before the Lords, and to that melancholy which he diſcovered upon the ſcaffold. Death, aggravated by guilt, would ſit heavier upon him than upon the other, even ſuppoſing him to have had the ſame reſolution. Balmerino's life was quite *unie*, and his death equal to the character he aimed at. We are to obſerve, that he meant to ſuffer as a Friend to the Stewarts, a Soldier, and a Scotſman. The firſt he manifeſted when he came out of the Tower, by his reply of "God ſave "King J——s;" the ſecond, by his dreſs, and numberleſs oſtentations of intrepidity; the laſt, by his plaid night-cap. Did you hear the ſtory of his ſending

ing a meſſage to Lord Kilmarnock? "That he had "been practiſing how to lye upon the block; and "had found out, the eaſieſt way of receiving the "blow was, to bite his tongue hard: or even if "he bit it off, it was no matter, they ſhould have "no further uſe for it." His behaviour ſeems to have wanted coolneſs, or elſe to equal that of Adrian, Cato, Sir T. More, &c. or any of thoſe heroes who had ſpirit enough to make an oſtentation of their unconcern. I had, from the printed accounts of their behaviour, an idea of their perſons, exactly conformable to the deſcription I read afterwards in your paper;—but enough—you ſend me ſterling matters of fact, and I return you tinſel obſervations. —I thank you for accenting Crōmērtie and Balmērino; I learnt Cullōden from you *before*.

I HAVE had little company ſince I ſaw you.—One day indeed I was ſurprized by a viſit from Mr. Thomſon, Author of The Seaſons.—Mr. Lyttelton introduced him.—I have not room to tell you all that paſſed.—They praiſed my place extravagantly;—propoſed alterations, &c. Thomſon was very facetious, and very complaiſant; invited me to his houſe at Richmond. There were many things ſaid worth *telling*, but not *writing* to you.—This has been a ſummer that I have ſpent more *ſocially* than any one theſe three years. I expect a good deal more company this week, the next, and the week after.—

Lady

Lady Luxborough talks of coming, and I believe will.—The viſit would bring my little walks into repute.—When will the time come, that I ſhall enjoy your company here a month uninterrupted? Dear Sir,

Yours moſt faithfully,

W. SHENSTONE.

XLII. To the ſame, with a new Theory of Political Principles.

Dear Mr. Graves,

I HAVE lately received a letter from Mr. Whiſtler, which conveys your compliments to me, and, by ſo doing, prompts me to acknowledge the receipt of your laſt kind letter. I obſerve you adhere ſtrictly to the apoſtolical precept of being "ſwift "to *hear*, ſlow to *ſpeak*;" the latter part of which, I would fain conclude, you underſtand too literally.

YOUR neighbour, I ſee, is not a little embarraſſed with his mills at Whitchurch. I have long had an eye upon his advertiſement in the London Evening Poſt, and been not a little ſcandalized thereat. What has the name of a poet to do with the publication of lands and tenements? or the idea of harmony with the noiſe of a water-mill? yet has

he

he extracted muſic from the ſubject, and mirth from his misfortunes; having ſent me a ballad upon the miller, written with much eaſe and ſome drollery.

As to the light in which you place your preſent fortunes, I can only ſay, that you have not that ſituation I could wiſh you for your *own ſake:* for ſo far as *I* am concerned in your elevation, I can aſſure you very faithfully, that no circumſtances in the world could more endear you to my affection, or recommend you to my reſpect, than the preſent. My *affection*, you will eaſily obſerve, from the very *nature* of affection in general, would ſtand no chance to be increaſed by your promotion; and as for reſpect, if I knew the degree you deſired, I would acquit myſelf of it to your ſatisfaction *now*; and were you ſettled at *Lambeth*, I ſhould expect that you would require no *more* from me upon that account; at leaſt in private: ſo that, ſo far as either *deference* or *friendſhip* is concerned, you are an Archbiſhop to *me* to all intents and purpoſes.—As to figure in the world, it depends much, I know, upon advancement; and yet even here you will be ever *ſure* of that kind of weight which ingenuity gives; diſcernible to the *ſmaller* indeed, but undoubtedly the more *valuable* part of the world;—but this is improper, as it is *philoſophy*, and as it is *advice*; neither of which is it ſuitable for me to ſuggeſt to you—"Alcinoo Poma, &c." As to the long ſeries

of *my* lamentations, I will not now enter upon the reaſonableneſs of them. It is a ſubject, to tell you the truth, on which you cannot reply without ſome danger of hurting me.—As for politics (you will blame this letter for dwelling ſo much upon the ſubject of yours); but as for politics, I think *poets* are *tories* by nature, ſuppoſing them to be by nature poets.—The love of an individual perſon or family, that has worn a crown for many ſucceſſions, is an inclination greatly adapted to the fanciful tribe. On the other hand, mathematicians, abſtract-reaſoners, of no manner of attachment to perſons, at leaſt to the *viſible* part of them, but prodigiouſly devoted to the ideas of virtue, liberty, intereſt, and ſo forth, are generally *whigs*. It happens agreeably enough to this maxim, that the whigs are friends to that wiſe, plodding, un-poetical people the Dutch—the tories, on the other hand, are taken mightily with that ſhewy, oſtentatious nation the French. Fox-hunters, that reſide amongſt the beauties of nature, and bid defiance to art, in ſhort, that have intellects of a poetical *turn*, are frequently tories—citizens, merchants, &c. that ſcarce ſee what nature is, and conſequently have no pretenſions to a poetical taſte, are, I think, generally argumentative and whiggiſh; —but perhaps I carry this too far.—Something there is in it, however, you will ſee: not that I would apply what I here ſay to particular revolutions, &c. I would only advance ſomething general and ſpeculative,

lative. Nor would I approve or condemn by this any one ſet of people now exiſting. Nor would I have you pretend to fiſh out my party from any thing I have ſaid; for I am of none.—The letter I ſent you laſt was *occaſional*, and when I ſee you I will tell you the occaſion. I abſolutely agree with you in every tittle of your political obſervations.—I am glad I do; for I know the poiſonous nature of party: and though we are *neither* violent, yet I ſhould fear it. My ſchemes are *doubtful* at preſent, but my face is ſet towards Bath.—I am confident of the ſervice thoſe waters would do me.—I hope you will exhilarate me with a letter ſoon.—I would fain have furniſhed out a letter to amuſe you after ſo long a ſilence, but I find myſelf unable; even *as* unable *as* I am to expreſs the regard with which I am

Yours,

The Leaſowes,
April 6, 1746.

W. SHENSTONE.

XLIII. Continuation of the ſame.

The Leaſowes,
May 11, 1746.

Dear Mr. Graves,

THOUGH I feel an irreſiſtible propenſity to write to you this very poſt, yet I cannot ſay that I am able to advance any thing tending either to your own

own or my ſatisfaction.—What is worſt of all is, I cannot fix the time of ſeeing you with ſo much preciſion as I would always endeavour where my pleaſure is ſo much concerned—I will tell you the whole affair.—I have for a long ſeaſon purpoſed to drink the Bath waters this ſpring; and *did* think of ſetting out in a week's time, when I received your letter, purpoſing to ſtay there a month; and from thence take a circuit which ſhould indulge me in a ſight of you, Mr. Whiſtler, and ſome few others, in my way home. The latter part of this ſcheme (though far the more agreeable to me) was rather doubtful and precarious; depending (as you expreſs it) on the ſtate of my finances after a month's continuance at Bath; which I conſidered, and *do* conſider, as a very probable means of bettering my conſtitution.—Now I covet to ſee you ſo much, that I would bring nothing but health in competition.—What I wiſh is, that you could, with convenience, either *haſten* or *delay* your journey, that you might find me before mine, or after my return, though I ſhould infinitely, and for many reaſons, prefer the former. I long to talk with you particularly now. I have much to ſay in regard to our friend's amour, to which you alluded in your laſt. I requeſt it as a favour of you, that you would conjure him, by the friendſhip I have ever born him, and by any eſteem which he has ever profeſſed for me, that he would do nothing very *material* in the affair till I

have talked it over, and given him my faithful ſentiments, "quod cenſet amiculus."

I AM not willing the balance ſhould turn entirely on the whig ſide: I would give it a greater equilibrium, if the following ſuggeſtion might effect it. Tories, I ſaid, have great, and ſometimes partial affections for the *perſon* of a king.—We will ſuppoſe that kings are alternately good and bad: their loyalty to the good one is commendable; their partiality to the bad one not to be vindicated. Whigs have *no* paſſion, *no* gratitude, towards the good prince: there they are wrong. They are ſevere upon the bad one, in which they are juſtifiable. I wiſh I had not begun theſe wholeſale diſtinctions, this miſerable ſpecimen of my politics. I proteſt againſt all epiſtolary diſputes. I am now embarraſſed in one, on much ſuch another ſcore, which fills up all my letter; for I love the laſt word, like a ſcold or a child. —I thank you for your little anecdotes from time to time: you may depend upon it, that I have never heard any thing *before*; for I never *do* hear any thing.—I am one very thankful letter in debt to your neighbour Whiſtler. I have at preſent nothing but the *propenſity* of a good correſpondent; but I will write ſoon. In the mean time, if you ſee him, aſk him if he goes to Bath or Briſtol this ſeaſon.—I beg you would write to me directly *when* you can come, and how I may regulate my motions

ſo

R.

ſo as to be beſt aſſured of ſeeing you.—Pray do not neglect a poſt. I am

Yours moſt entirely,

W. S.

XLIV. To the ſame, on the Mixture of Pleaſure and Pain.

The Leaſowes,

Dear Mr. Graves, June the laſt, 1747.

IT is now, I believe, near half a year ſince I had the favour of a letter from you. When I wrote laſt, I diſcovered a more than ordinary ſolicitude for *one* immediate anſwer. It puzzles me to account for your unuſual ſilence, otherwiſe than upon ſuppoſition of ſome offence you have taken: and it puzzles me as much to gueſs by what behaviour of mine I have been ſo unhappy as to give you that offence.

I AM vain enough to imagine that the little merit I have, deſerves ſomewhat more regard than I have met with from the world. Be that as it will, the diſappointment I muſt undergo, by any *appearance* of neglect from the friends I value, would more effectually diſpirit me than any other whatſoever.

I HAVE publiſhed my deſign of viſiting you, and Mr. Whiſtler in Oxfordſhire, to all the world. A thouſand incidents have hitherto interfered with it, which I will not now recount. But when I look back upon the regular ſucceſſion of them, it looks as if Deſtiny had ſome hand in detaining me. The moſt *vigorous* of my *hopes* dwell upon ſeeing you next winter, though I am not a little indulgent to *thoſe* that tell me I may ſee you long before.

I HAVE brought my place here to greater perfection than it has ever yet appeared in; and, with the *mob*, it is in ſome vogue. Nevertheleſs, I do not know that I ever reliſhed it leſs in my life than I have done this ſummer. Bad health, bad ſpirits, no company to my mind, and no correſpondences, are enough to blaſt the ſweeteſt ſhades, and to poiſon the pureſt fountains. Some of theſe misfortunes I can impute to my own miſconduct, and it embitters them. The two laſt I can leſs account for, having at all times done all I was able to recommend myſelf to my *friends*, behaving at the ſame time with courteſy to the reſt of the world. The fact is not true; otherwiſe I might reſolve it into this, that I alone am idle, and all the world is *buſy*.

I FANCY you will imagine I lay too much ſtreſs upon Mr. Thomſon's viſit, when I mention the following inſcription upon a ſeat in Virgil's grove:

" CELEB'MO

" CELEB'MO POETÆ
" IACOBO THOMSON, S.
" PROPE FONTES ILLI NON FASTIDITOS
" G. S.
" SEDEM HANC ORNAVIT.

" Quæ tibi, quæ tali reddam pro carmine dona?
" Nam neque me tantum *venientis* * *ſibilus* Auſtri,
" Nec perculſa juvant fluctu tam litora, nec quæ
" Saxoſas inter decurrunt flumina valles."

VIRG.

I want your opinion of it, and whether it were not better thus,

" —— THOMSON,
" QVI CVM QVICQVID VBIQVE RVRIS EST
" AVT AMOENVM AVT VARIVM
" MIRE DEPINXERAT,
" HOS ETIAM FONTES NON FASTIDIVIT."

But you will diſcover at firſt glance an impropriety in both.—Now I am upon inſcriptions, I ſend you one from a coin dug up very near me a few weeks ago:

Round the head,

" IMP . . . . . V AVG GER DAC M"

On the reverſe,

" S P Q R OPTIMO PRINCIPI COS VI"

* The verſe whiſpers here.

Within which is an human figure ſitting, with one hand reclined upon a wand; the other, as I take it, holding forth an olive.—I have given my opinion, it is one of Trajan's; and my virtuoſo character will reſt upon the truth of it. It is a ſilver coin, but very obſcure. There appears a large maſs of ruins, rough ſtone, very ſtrongly cemented, where they found it.—If you were here, it might amuſe you.

HEAVINESS may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.—I have ſo ſettled a notion of the proportionate mixture of pleaſure and pain in this life, that I expect one to ſucceed the other as naturally as day and night. I own, this is owing to the ſoul as much as to outward incidents. Sorrow prepares it for mirth, and *vice verſa*.—The durations of both differ.—Laſt ſummer I ſpent agreeably; this quite otherwiſe.—To-day I have been quite melancholy; I expect happineſs to-morrow, from either an aptitude of mind, or ſome incident ſufficient to overcome its inaptitude.—Perhaps that incident may be a letter from you; I wiſh it may, and am moſt truly

Yours,

W. S.

I had a coin of Veſpaſian given me to-day, and I begin a collection: if you have any duplicates, you

you will pleaſe to oblige me.—I want to correct my elegies, by your aſſiſtance.—I will begin no more.

XLV. To the ſame, with Thoughts on Advice.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, Sept. 21, 1747.

I AM under ſome apprehenſion that you dread the ſight of a letter from me, as it ſeems to lay claim to the compliment of an anſwer. I will therefore write you one that ſhall wave its privilege, at leaſt till ſuch time as your leiſure encourages, or your preſent diſſipation does not forbid, you to ſend one.—I dare now no longer expatiate upon the affair you have in hand; it is enough for me if you will excuſe the freedom I *have* taken. I have often known *delay* produce good effects in ſome caſes which even ſagacity itſelf could not ſurmount; and, if I thought I did not go too far, would preſume to recommend it now. You know I have very little of the temper of an alderman. I almoſt hate the *idea* of wealthineſs as much as the *word*. It ſeems to me to carry a notion of fulneſs, ſtagnation, and inſignificancy. It is this diſpoſition of *mine* that can *alone* give any weight to the advice I ſend you, as it proves me not to give it through any partiality to fortune. As to what remains, you are, I hope, aſſured of the value I muſt ever have for you in *any*

circumſtances, and the regard I ſhall always ſhew for any that belongs to you. I cannot like you *leſs* or *more*.—I now drop into other matters. Bergen, I ſee, is taken at laſt; pray what are the ſentiments of your political companions? I dined ſome time ago with Mr. Lyttelton and Mr. Pitt, who both agreed it was worth twenty thouſand men to the French; which is a light in which I never uſed to conſider it. Any little intimation that you pleaſe to *confer* upon me, enables me to ſeem *wiſe* in this country for a month; particularly if I take care to adjuſt my face accordingly.—As I was returning laſt Sunday from church, whom ſhould I meet in my way, but that *ſweet-ſouled* bard Mr. James Thomſon, in a chaiſe drawn by two horſes lengthways.—I welcomed him into the country, and aſked him to accompany Mr. Lyttelton to The Leaſowes (who had offered me a viſit), which he promiſed to do. So I am in daily expectations of them and all the world this week. I fancy they will laviſh all their praiſes upon *nature*, reſerving none for poor *art* and *me*. But if I ever live, and am able to perfect my ſchemes, I ſhall not deſpair of pleaſing the few I firſt began with, *the few friends prejudiced in my favour*; and then "Fico por los malignatores." Cenſures will not affect me; for I am armed ſo ſtrong in *vanity*, that they will paſs by me as the idle wind which I regard not.—I think it pretty near equal, in a country place, whether you gain the ſmall num-

ber

ber of taſters, or the *large crowd* of the vulgar. The latter are more frequently met with, and *gape*, *ſtupent*, and *ſtare* much more. But one would chuſe to pleaſe a few *friends* of taſte before mob or gentry, the great vulgar or the ſmall; becauſe therein one gratifies both one's ſocial paſſions and one's pride, that is, one's *ſelf*-love. Above all things, I would wiſh to pleaſe *you*; and if I have a wiſh that projects or is prominent beyond the reſt, it is to ſee you placed to your ſatisfaction near me; but Fortune muſt vary from her uſual treatment before ſhe favours me ſo far.—And yet there *was* a time, when one might probably have prevailed on her. I knew not what to do.—The affair was ſo intricately circumſtanced—your ſurprizing ſilence after the hint I gave.—Mr. D— offering to ſerve any friend of mine; nay, preſſing me to uſe the opportunity.—His other relations, his guardians, taizing him with ſure ſymptoms of a rupture in caſe of a refuſal on *their* ſide.—Mr. P— ſoliciting me if the place were *ſold*, which it could not legally be. Friendſhip, propriety, impartiality, ſelf-intereſt (which I *little* regarded), endeavouring to diſtract me; I think I never ſpent ſo diſagreeable an half-year ſince I was born. To cloſe the whole, I could not *foreſee* the event, which is almoſt foretold in your laſt letter, and I knew I could not ſerve you; but I muſt render it a *neceſſary* one. In ſhort, when I can tell you the whole affair at leiſure, you will own it to be of ſuch

a nature, that I must be ever in suspence concerning my behaviour, and of course shall never read it with pleasure. Believe me, with the truest affection,

Yours,

W. SHENSTONE.

XLVI. To a Friend, from The Leasowes.

Dear Sir, 1747.

IT is not much above two hours since I received your obliging letter, and I am already set down to answer it.—To speak the truth, I had almost given you over: I imagined you had taken umbrage at some expression or circumstance in my epistle, and were determined to make me sensible you did so by your silence. I hope this error of mine will serve to establish one rule on *both* sides.—It is what ought, I am sure, always to take place, where people wish a perpetuity of friendship. I mean, never, upon circumstances of disrespect, to admit of circumstantial evidence.

I AM very grave, so you may depend on the sincerity of all I shall say. I saw several beauties in your former elegy; but, though it was "formosa," it did not appear to me "ipsa forma." I like this that you have

have now ſent *very* much. It has a ſimplicity which your laſt a little wanted, and has thought *enough*. I begin to be ſeldom pleaſed with the compoſitions of others, or my own; but I could be really *fond* of this, with a few alterations that I could propoſe:—but you muſt know, at the ſame time, that theſe are ſuch as no one would approve beſide myſelf.—I know it.—However, there are ſome ſeeming *faults* in it.

I HAVE been greatly mortified in my correſpondents of late.—I even ſaid in my haſte, All friends are faithleſs.—G—, after a month's expectation, which he had confirmed to me, of ſeeing him here, let me know about a fortnight ſince, that I had more leiſure than him; and, ſince it did not ſuit his convenience to come, I ought to take the opportunity of viſiting him, and ſeeing Derbyſhire while he continues in it.—W— has not wrote to me theſe ſix weeks.—Outing has been, moreover, dumb for the ſame ſpace of time; and I purpoſe in my heart to behave with ſome diſtance towards both, for this neglect (ſee my rule of circumſtantial evidence).

IT is pity you cannot ſpare a day or two to come and ſee me. My wood grows exceſſively pleaſant, and its pleaſantneſs vexes me; becauſe nobody will come that can taſte it.

YOUR

YOUR health, according to your deſcription, is much the ſame with mine; but, from the gaiety of your ſtyle and *deſigns*, I collect that it is greatly better.

I HAVE an alcove, ſix elegies, a ſeat, two epitaphs (one upon myſelf), three ballads, four ſongs, and a ſerpentine river, to ſhew you when you come. Will the compoſitions come ſafe to you, if I ſend my book, which contains the *only* copies of ſeveral things (which I could not remember if they were loſt)?—but I will not ſend them. If my horſe gets well, I may eſſay a viſit for two days, and bring them with me, that I may make comments while you read them, as beſeemeth a genuine author to do.

I AM raiſing a green-houſe from the excreſcences of Lord Dudley's; but I do not find that "vient l'appetit en mangeant," that I grow fonder of my collection proportionably as it increaſes.

I SHOULD think myſelf fortunate enough at preſent, if, like you, I could only find that I had been mentioned for a vacant poſt; but I have withdrawn all my views from court-preferment, and fixed them on finding a pot of money, which I determine to be the far more probable ſcheme.

I HAVE

I HAVE little health and frequent mortification, ſo that no one need envy me; and yet, I believe, there *are* that do. Is any enviable but ſuch as are unambitious? I never ſhall be able to reckon myſelf of that tribe, which have engroſſed all *happineſs* to themſelves, and left the reſt of the world nothing but hopes and poſſeſſions. Yet I do no much feel the pains of ambition while I am converſing with ingenious friends of my own level: but in *other* company it hurts me. Let me adviſe you, now I think of it, to dread the company of ſilly people, out-of-the-way people, and, in one word, what men of genius call *the vulgar*. You run ten times the riſque of being mortified, voluntarily or unkowingly, amongſt the latter of theſe, to what you do amongſt men of ſenſe and politeneſs, be they ever ſo malicious;—but my paper is filled.

Do write ſoon.

XLVII. To the ſame.

It is ſomewhere about the 20th of Sept. 1747; and I write from The Leaſowes.

Dear Sir,

I THINK I have lived to out-correſpond almoſt all my correſpondents; whether you are the laſt that is to be ſubdued, I will not ſay; the reſt are ſo fatigued,

fatigued, that they are not able to atchieve a lie. Apprized of this, and being by nature diſpoſed to have mercy on the vanquiſhed, "parcere ſubjectis," I ſeldom write a ſyllable more than is requiſite to further ſome ſcheme, or aſcertain ſome interview the latter of theſe being the purpoſe of *this* mine epiſtle. I am in great hopes I ſhall be at liberty to ſee you ere many weeks be paſt; and would beg of you, in the mean time, to inform me, by letter, when I am likely, or when very *unlikely*, to meet with you at home. I am detained, juſt at preſent, by continual expectations of the Hagley family.

As I was returning from church on Sunday laſt, whom ſhould I meet, in a chaiſe, with two horſes length-ways, but that right friendly bard, Mr. Thomſon? I complimented him upon his arrival in this country, and aſked him to accompany Mr. Lyttelton to The Leaſowes, which he ſaid he would with abundance of pleaſure; and ſo we parted. You will obſerve, that the more ſtreſs I lay upon this viſit, and the more I *diſcover* to you, the more ſubſtantial is my apology for deferring mine into Warwickſhire. I own, I am pleaſed with the proſpect of ſhewing them ſomething at The Leaſowes beyond what they expect. I have begun my terras on the high hill I ſhewed you, made ſome conſiderable improvements in Virgil's grove, and finiſhed a walk from it to the houſe, after a manner which you will approve.

They

They are going to build a caſtle in the park round the lodge, which, if well executed, muſt have a good effect; and they are going likewiſe to build a rotund to terminate the viſto. The fault is, that they anticipate every thing which I propoſe to do when I become *rich*; but as that is never likely to be, perhaps it is not of any importance;—but what I term *rich*, implies no great deal; I believe you are a witneſs to the moderation of my deſires; and I flatter myſelf that you will believe your friend in *that* reſpect ſomething above the vulgar:

"Crede non illum tibi de ſceleſtâ
"Plebe dilectum, neque ſic fidelem,
"Sic lucro averſum, potuiſſe naſci
"Patre pudendo."

If I come to your houſe, poſitively I will not go to ſee Mr. M—. He has been twice as near me as The Grange, with C— L—, and never deemed my place worth ſeeing. I doubt, you are a little too modeſt in praiſing it wherever you go.—Why don't you applaud it with both hands, "utroque "pollice?"—"Parcentes ego dexteras odi; ſparge "roſas."—I am ſo very *partial* to my native place, that it ſeems a miracle to me that it is not more famous. But I complain unjuſtly of you; for, as you have always contributed to my happineſs, you have taken every opportunity to contribute to my figure.

I wish I could say the same of some who have it *more* in their *power*.

I HAVE yet about a thousand things to say to you—not now, though.—Lady L—h'd, till I reserve till I see you. A coach with a cormer is a pretty kind of phænomenon at my door—few prettier, except the face of such a friend as you; for I do not want the grace to prefer a generous and spirited friendship to all the gewgaws that ambition can *contrive*. I have wrote out my elegies, and heartily wish you had them to look over before I come.—I know not how to send them.—I shall bring and leave some poetry with you.—"Thus & odores, &c." or rather a proper covering for "Thus & odores, &c." "piper, & quicquid chartis amicitur ineptis."

Adieu! dear Sir.

Believe me ever yours,

W. SHENSTONE.

XLVIII. To the same, with a Song.

Dear Sir, 1747.

BEING just returned from a small excursion, it was with the utmost pleasure that I read over your letter; and, though it abounds both in wit and

and waggery, I ſit down incontinently to anſwer it with *none*.

THE agreeableneſs of your letters is now heightened by the ſurprize they give me. I muſt own, I have thought you in a manner loſt to the amuſements in which you once delighted, correſpondences, works of taſte and fancy, &c. If you think the opinion worth removing, you need only favour me with ſuch a letter now and then, and I will place you (in my imagination) where you ſhall ſee all the favourites of fortune cringing at your feet.

I THINK I could add about half a dozen hints to your obſervations on electricity, which might at *leaſt* diſguiſe the facts; and then why will you not put it into ſome news-paper, or monthly pamphlet? you might diſcover yourſelf to whom you have a mind. It would give more than ordinary pleaſure at this time.—Some other will take the hint.—Pity your piece ſhould not have the advantage of novelty as well as of wit!

I DINED and ſtayed a night with Dr. E—; he was extremely obliging, and I am glad of ſuch a friend to viſit at B. He aſked much after you.—He ſhewed me his Ovid—I adviſed him to finiſh ſome one epiſtle *highly*, that he might ſhew it,—

The whole will *not take*, though it goes against me to tell him ſo. I ſhould be glad he could ſucceed at B.; and could I ſerve him, it would be with a [illegible] conſcience; for I take him to excel the [illegible] of B. phyſicians far in point of ſpeculation and diligence, &c.

I SEND you the ſong you aſked for, and requeſt of you to write me out your new edition of the election verſes; and, at your leiſure, a copy of the poem which we altered.

THE LARK.

" Go, tuneful bird, that gladd'ſt the ſkies,
" To Daphne's window ſpeed thy way,
" And there on quiv'ring pinions riſe,
" And there thy vocal art diſplay.

" And if ſhe deign thy notes to hear,
" And if ſhe praiſe thy matin ſong;
" Tell her, the ſounds that ſooth her ear,
" To ſimple Britiſh birds belong.

" Tell her, in livelier plumes array'd,
" The bird from Indian groves may ſhine:
" But aſk the lovely, partial maid,
" What are his notes compar'd to thine?

" Then

"Then bid her trent that witleſs beau
"And all his motley race with ſcorn;
"And ne'er deſerving Damon's woe,
"Who ſings her praiſe, and ſings forlorn."

I am, Sir,

Your moſt faithful friend and ſervant,

W. SHENSTONE.

HAVE you read Watſon, Martyn, and Freke, on electricity? I accidentally met with the two former, by which my head is rendered almoſt giddy—electrics, non-electrics, electrics *per ſe*, and bodies that are only conductors of electricity, have a plaguy bad effect on ſo vertical a brain as mine.

I WILL infallibly ſpend a week with you, perhaps about February, if it ſuits you; though I think too it muſt be later.

I HAVE been painting in water colours, during a viſit I made, flowers. I would recommend the amuſement to you, if you can allow it the time that is expedient.

I TRUST you will give me one entire week in the ſpring, when my late alterations may exhibit themſelves to advantage.

XLIX. To the ſame, after a Visit.

Dear Mr. Jago,

I AM tempted once more to apologize for the unſeaſonable viſit I paid you, though I acted entirely innocent in that reſpect, even as much as the poſt-boy was guilty; for had my letter arrived in due time, you had [illegible] with an opportunity of waiving my compliment to a more convenient ſeaſon. I was *chiefly* uneaſy upon *your* account. I ſpent the time very agreeably, and only leſs [illegible] than I might, had I not been conſcious to myſelf [illegible] upon domeſtic tenderneſſes.

I SPENT the Sunday night and the next day at Mr. Wren's; and am now juſt returned from Mr. Dolman's, who has made me a genteel preſent of Spence's Polymetis. I have not yet *read* many dialogues in it, but I have *dipped* in ſeveral; and have reaſon to be well enough ſatisfied with the ſimple and uninvidious manner in which he has introduced Mr. Lowth's poem. I have long known of this intended *introduction* (which I accidentally found to have been ſettled betwixt them before I publiſhed *mine* on the ſame ſubject), and a little dreaded the *form* of it. I have long ago made conſiderable improvements

provements in mine, and have a mind one day to publish it once more; after which, let it sleep in peace. I have sometimes thought of printing my next title-page thus, viz. "Poems; consisting of Songs, Odes, and Elegies; with an improved edition of The Judgement of Hercules, and of The School-mistress." But I have but very few critical acquaintance, and I live at a great distance from those I have; stationed amongst the *makers* and the *wearers* of hobnails;

"Far from the joys that with my soul agree,
"From *wit*, from *learning*—very far from thee."

PARNELL.

I know I have thrown a great number of careless things into your hands. I know to *whom* I intrusted my follies; but I know *not* what they *are*:—I believe, in general, that they consist of mis-begotten embryos and abortive births, which it had been merely decent to have buried in—some part of my garden;—but I was morally assured that you would expose nothing of mine to my disadvantage. As to some that are *less imperfect*, you promised your observations, and I desire you would make them with the utmost freedom. I can bear any censure which you shall pass by way of letter, and I beg once more that you would not be sparing. It will be esteemed as great a favour as you can do me. When they have gone through your hands, and those of one

or two more friends, I shall, perhaps, think of publishing them; though as to that, much depends upon the advice I receive, and previously on the opportunity I have of receiving it. I am in hopes that you will be pretty full in discovering to me, *which you dislike the least, what faults you find, and what improvements they are capable of.* I set you a tedious task; but I will return the favour as far as I am able either in *the same way* or any other. This brings me to say, that, if there be any compositions of yours that you would have me correct (and there are several of which I want a copy), I would beg you to send them. Your Blackbird excels any singing-bird I ever heard; and I beseech you to convey it to The Leasowes by the next opportunity, that he may acquire fame near other rills, and in other valleys, than those in which he was produced.

I HAVE many compliments to make in your country; to Mr. H—, Mrs. N—, Mrs. J—, Mr. F—, Mr. T—, and your brother. If I go over to Mr. W—'s, I will assuredly call and spend a night with you.—*That* is precarious.—But whether I do or not, I would willingly hope to see you this spring and summer more than once; as a *critic* and as a *friend*: nor do I forget the promise of Mr. H— and Mr. F—;—but of these things more when I send for the papers, which I purpose to do to-morrow fortnight, that is, the twenty-ninth of February.

I HAVE

I HAVE ſuffered greatly by railing at the black button on a parſon's great coat. Had Mr. Hall's been thus diſtinguiſhed, he could not have miſtaken mine for his own; which latter I ſent in order to be commuted at Birmingham, and was almoſt ſtarved to death before I could accompliſh the exchange. There is no trifling with any *part* of orthodoxy with impunity.—That is the moral.

I HAVE received a very obliging letter from Lady Luxborough, wherein ſhe tells me that Lady Hartford admires my place in her deſcription. Mr. Thomſon is intimate at Lady Hartford's; and I ſuppoſe Lady Hartford may have been informed by Lady L. that Mr. Thomſon has been here; ſo I conclude, in mere vanity, that my farm is advancing in reputation.

WHAT think you of Mr. Carte's Hiſtory? or what of his narrative concerning the Pretender's touching for the King's evil! I think one is not, however, to give up his book entirely; becauſe, with *all his ſuperſtition*, he may have ſeveral anecdotes that one would like to read.

I HAVE had great expectations from the beautiful veins of a piece of oak of which I have had a table made; but, upon a thorough ſurvey of it, it is ſo

like nothing in the world as old [illegible] callimanco night-gown.

I HAVE nothing to add worth beginning upon another page; but I happened not to make a regular concluſion in my preceding one.

You muſt give me ſome time to colour you a collection of flowers (that octavo edition I ſhewed you here); and then I will make Mrs. Jago a preſent of it. I believe I can engage Mr. Delaval to aſſiſt me, who is much my ſuperior in point of accuracy; and the inſcription at the beginning is to run ſomehow thus:

" ELEGANTISSIMAE PVELLAE
" DOROTHEAE FANCOVRT,
" QVAE DERDILECTI SVI CONDISCIPVLI
" RICHARDI IAGO
" AMORES MERVIT,
" D. D.
" GVLIELMVS SHENSTONE;
" DEBITAE NYMPHIS OPIFEX CORONAE."

That is, by trade a garland-maker; but this inſcription I may alter, if I can think of any thing more expreſſive of the regard which I have ever born and ſtill bear you.

LORD

Lord Dudley is gone; and franks are no more. I have nothing to wish you but health and prosperity; "det vitam, det opes;—" with these you will easily compound that cordial *happiness*, having even the ingredient that is requisite at hand.

I am, most affectionately,

Your very faithful friend, &c.

W. SHENSTONE.

L. To Mr. JAGO.

The Leasowes,
Dear Sir, Mar. 23, 1747-8.

I HAVE sent Tom over for the papers which I left under your inspection: having nothing to add upon this head, but that the more *freely* and *particularly* you give me your opinion, the greater will be the obligation which I shall have to acknowledge.

I SHALL be very glad, if I happen to receive a good large bundle of your own compositions; in regard to which, I will observe any commands which you shall please to lay upon me.

I AM

I AM favoured with a certain correſpondence, by way of letter, which I told you I ſhould be glad to cultivate; and I find it very entertaining.

PRAY did you receive my anſwer to your laſt letter, ſent by way of London? I ſhould be extremely ſorry to be debarred the pleaſure of writing to you by the poſt, as often as I feel a violent propenſity to deſcribe the notable incidents of my life; which amount to about as much as the tinſel of your little boy's hobby-horſe.

I AM on the point of purchaſing a couple of buſts for the niches in my hall; and believe me, my good friend, I never proceed one ſtep in ornamenting my little farm, but I enjoy the hopes of rendering it more agreeable to you, and the ſmall circle of acquaintance which ſometimes favour me with their company.

I SHALL be extremely glad to ſee you and Mr. Tancourt when the trees are green; that is, in May; but I would not have you content yourſelf with a ſingle viſit this ſummer. If Mr. Hardy (to whom you will make my compliments) inclines to favour me ſo far, you muſt calculate ſo as to wait on him whenever he finds it convenient; though I have *better hopes* of making his reception here agreeable

to

to him when my Lord Dudley comes down.—I wonder how he would like the ſcheme I am upon, of exchanging a large tankard for a ſilver ſtandiſh.

I HAVE had a couple of paintings given me ſince you were here. One of them is a Madona, valued, as it is ſaid, at ten guineas in Italy, but which you would hardly purchaſe at the price of five ſhillings. However, I am endeavouring to make it out to be one of Carlo Maratt's, who was a firſt hand, and famous for Madones; even ſo as to be nick-named "Cartuccio delle Madonne" by Salvator Roſa. Two letters of the cypher (CM) agree; what ſhall I do with regard to the third? It is a ſmall piece, and ſadly blackened. It is about the ſize (though not quite the ſhape) of the Bacchus over the parlour door, and has much ſuch a frame.

A PERSON may amuſe himſelf almoſt as cheaply as he pleaſes. I find no ſmall delight in rearing all ſorts of poultry; geeſe, turkeys, pullets, ducks, &c. I am alſo ſomewhat ſmitten with a blackbird which I have purchaſed: a very fine one; brother by father, but not by mother, to the unfortunate bird you ſo beautifully deſcribe, a copy of which deſcription you muſt not fail to ſend me;—but, as I ſaid before, one may eaſily habituate one's ſelf to cheap amuſements; that is, *rural* ones (for all town amuſements are horridly expenſive);—I would have

you

you cultivate your garden; plant flowers, have a bird or two in the hall (they will at *leaſt* amuſe your children); write now and then a ſong; buy now and then a book; write now and then a letter to

Your moſt ſincere friend,

and affectionate ſervant,

W. SHENSTONE.

P. S. I HOPE you have exhauſted all your ſpirit of criticiſm upon my verſes, that you may have none left to cavil at this letter; for I am aſhamed to think, that *you*, in particular, ſhould receive the dulleſt I ever wrote in my life. Make my compliments to Mrs. Jago.—She can go a little abroad, you ſay.—Tell her, I ſhould be proud to ſhew her The Leaſowes. Adieu!

LI. To Mr. ——, on his Marriage.

This was written Auguſt 21, 1748; but not ſent till the 28th.

Dear Sir,

HOW little ſoever I am inclined to write at this time, I cannot bear that you ſhould cenſure me of unkindneſs in ſeeming to overlook the late change in your ſituation. It will, I *hope*, be eſteemed ſuperfluous

ſuperfluous in *me* to ſend you my moſt cordial wiſhes that you may be happy; but it will, perhaps, be *ſomething* more ſignificant to ſay, that I believe you *will*: building my opinion on the knowledge I have long had of your own temper, and the account you ive me of the perſon's whom you have made choice of, to whom I deſire you to pay my ſincere and moſt affectionate compliments.

I SHALL always be glad to find you *præſentibus æquum*, though I ſhould always be pleaſed when I ſaw you *tentantem majora*. I think you ſhould neglect no *opportunity* at this time of life to puſh your fortune ſo far as an *elegant* competency, that you be not embarraſſed with thoſe kind of ſolicitudes towards the evening of your day;

"Ne te ſemper inops agitet vexetque cupido,
"Ne pavor, & rerum *mediocriter utilium* ſpes!"

I would have you acquire, if poſſible, what the world calls, with ſome *propriety*, an *eaſy* fortune; and what I interpret, ſuch a fortune as allows of ſome inaccuracy and inattention, that one may not be continually in ſuſpenſe about the laying out a *ſhilling*;—this kind of advice may ſeem extremely dogmatical in *me*; but, if it carries any haughty air, I will obviate it by owning that I never *acted* as I ſay. I have loſt *my* road to happineſs, I confeſs; and, inſtead of purſuing the way to the fine lawns and venerable oaks which diſtinguiſh the region of it,

I am

I am got into the pitiful parterre-garden of amuſement, and view the nobler ſcenes at a *diſtance*. I think I can ſee the *road* too that *leads* the better way, and can ſhew it others; but I have many miles to meaſure back before I can get into it myſelf, and no kind of reſolution to take a ſingle ſtep. My chief amuſements at preſent are the ſame they have long been, and lie ſcattered about my farm. The French have what they call a *parque ornée*; I ſuppoſe, approaching about as near to a garden as the park at Hagley. I give my place the title of a *ferme ornée*; though, if I had money, I ſhould hardly confine myſelf to ſuch decorations as that name requires. I have made great improvements; and the *conſequence* is, that I long to have you ſee them.

I HAVE not heard whether Miſs ——'s match proceeded.—I ſuppoſe your objections were grounded on the perſon's *age* and *temper*; and that they had the leſs weight, as they ſuppoſed you acted indiſcreetly yourſelf: I can ſay but little on the occaſion. You know —— better than I do. Only this I muſt add, that I have ſo great an eſteem for your ſiſter, that it will be neceſſary to my *eaſe*, that whoever marries her ſhe ſhould be happy.

I HAVE little hopes that I ſhall now you ſee often in this country; though it would be *you*, in all probability,

bability, as ſoon as *any*, that would take a journey of fifty miles,

"To ſee the *pooreſt* of the ſons of men."

The truth is, my affairs are miſerably embroiled, by my own negligence, and the non-payment of tenants. I believe, I ſhall be forced to ſeize on one next week for three years and a half's rent, due laſt Lady-day; an affair to which I am greatly averſe, both through *indolence* and *compaſſion*. I hope, however, I ſhall be always able (as I am ſure I ſhall be deſirous) to entertain a friend of a *philoſophical regimen*, ſuch as you and Mr. Whiſtler; and that will be all I can do.

HAGLEY park is conſiderably improved ſince you were here, and they have built a caſtle by way of ruin on the higheſt part of it, which is *juſt* ſeen from my *wood*; but by the removal of a tree or two (growing in a wood that joins to the park, and which, fortunately enough, belongs to Mr. Dolman and me), I believe it may be rendered a conſiderable object here.

I PURPOSE to write to Mr. Whiſtler either this poſt or the next. The fears you ſeemed in upon my account are very kind, but have no grounds. I am, dear Mr. ——, habitually and ſincerely,

Your moſt affectionate

W. SHENSTONE.

Mr

My humble ſervice to your neighbours.—Smith (whom you knew at Derby) will publiſh a print of my grove in a ſmall collection.

LII. To Mr. Jago, with an Invitation to The Leaſowes.

Sept. 3, Saturday night, 1748.

Dear Mr. Jago,

I HARDLY know whether it will be prudent in me to own, that I wrote you a *long letter* upon the receipt of your laſt, which I now have upon my table. I condemn this habit in *myſelf* entirely, and ſhould, I am ſure, be very unhappy, if my friends, by my example, ſhould be induced to contract the ſame. The truth is, I had not expreſſed myſelf in it to my mind, and it was full of blots, and blunders, and interlinings; yet, ſuch as it was, it had wearied my attention, and given me a diſinclination to begin it afreſh. I am now impatient to remove any ſcruple you may have concerning my grateful ſenſe of all your favours, and the invariable continuance of my affection and eſteem.—I find by your laſt obliging letter, that my machinations and devices are not entirely private.—You knew of my draught of Hagley Caſtle about the bigneſs of a barley-corn; you knew of our intended viſit to

Lady Luxborough's; and I muſt add, Mr. Thomas Hall knew of my contrivance for the embelliſhment of Mr. Hardy's houſe. Nothing is there hid that ſhall not be revealed.—Our viſit to Barrels is now over and paſt.—Lady Luxborough has ſeen Hagley Caſtle in the original:—and as to my deſire that my draught might be ſhewn to no *Chriſtian* ſoul, you ſurely did but ill comply with it, when you ſhewed that *drawing* to a *Clergyman*. However, you may have acted up to my *real* meaning, if you have taken care not to ſhew it to any connoiſſeur. I meant chiefly to guard againſt any one that knows the rules, in whoſe eyes, I am ſure, it could not turn to my credit.—Pray how do you like the feſtoons dangling over the oval windows?—It is the chief advantage in repairing an old houſe, that one may deviate from the rules without any extraordinary cenſure.

I WILL not trouble you *now* with many particulars. The intent of Tom's coming is, to deſire your company and Mrs. Jago's this week.—I ſhould be extremely glad if your convenience would allow you to come on Monday or Tueſday; but, if it is *entirely* impracticable, I would beſeech you not to put off the viſit longer than the Monday following, for the leaves of my groves begin to fall a great pace.—I beg once more, you would let no ſmall inconvenience prevent your being here on Monday.—As

to my viſit at Icheneton, you may depend upon it ſoon after; and I hope you will not ſtand upon punctilio, when I mention my inclination that you may all take a walk through my coppices before their beauty is much impaired. Were I in a ſprightly vein, I would aim at ſaying ſomething genteel by way of *anſwer* to Mrs. Jago's compliment.—As it is, I can only thank her for the *ſubſtance*, and applaud the *politeneſs* of it.—I poſtpone all other matters till I ſee you. I am, habitually and ſincerely,

Your moſt affectionate friend,

W. SHENSTONE.

I BEG my compliments to Mr. Hardy.

P. S. I AM not accuſtomed, my dear friend, to ſend you a *blank* page; nor can I be content to do ſo now.

I THANK you very *ſenſibly* for the verſes with which you honour me. I think them good lines, and ſo do others that have ſeen them; but you will give me leave, when I ſee you, to propoſe ſome little alteration. As to an epiſtle, it would be executed with *difficulty*, and I would have it turn to your credit as well as my own. But you have certainly of late acquired an *eaſe* in writing; and I am tempted to think, that what you write henceforth

ſorth will be univerſally good. Perſons that have ſeen your elegies like "The Blackbirds" beſt, as it is moſt aſſuredly the moſt *correct*; but I, who pretend to great penetration, can foreſee that "The "Linnets" *will* be made to excel.—More of this when I ſee you. Poor Miſs G—, J— R— ſays, is married; and poor Mr. Thomſon, Mr. Pitt tells me, is *dead*.—He was to have been at Hagley this week, and then I ſhould probably have ſeen him *here*.—As it is, I will erect an urn in Virgil's Grove to his memory.—I was really as much ſhocked to hear of his death, as if I had known and loved him for a number of years:—God knows, I lean on a very few friends; and if they drop me, I become a wretched miſanthrope.

LIII. To the ſame.

Sunday night,
Dear Mr. Jago, Sept. 11, 1748.

I TAKE this opportunity of acknowledging the juſtice of your excuſes. Mrs. Jago's preſent circumſtances render her viſit quite impracticable, and yours I have the ſame kind of reaſon to diſpenſe with; as I gueſs, that ſhe could as ſoon take a journey *herſelf* at this time, as bear that *you* ſhould.—But to ſay I was not greatly mortified, would be

doing myſelf the greateſt injuſtice. *Diſappointed* I was, you may be ſure, to hear excuſes; even as much as Sir John Falſtaff, when Mr. Dombledon put him in mind of *ſecurity*, inſtead of ſending him *two* and *thirty yards* of ſattin to make him a *ſhort* cloak. And on the whole, I began to accuſe you and Mrs. Jago of *colloguing* together, to fix your viſit at a time when you were well aſſured you ſhould have an *apology* to ſend me inſtead. Now, if I ſhould preſs this accuſation, pray how would you evade the force of it?—The next thing I am to ſpeak to, is your verſes. I have made you my acknowledgments *before*; and as you are ſo good as to accept them, I will not trouble you with additional profeſſions, or repetitions of the paſt. I will depend upon your good-ſenſe for an excuſe, if I only add what I think proper as to any *alteration*; wherein I have a view to *your* credit, as well as my *own*. I confeſs, it requires ſome nicety to inſcribe ſuch an elegy as "The Gold-finches" without the danger you foreſaw. But I think it *may* be done (and *is* pretty nearly) in ſuch manner that no man of *taſte* will be tempted to ridicule it; and as for the vulgar, of whatever *rank* they be, it is abſolutely neceſſary many times to *give them up*. *Taſte* and *tenderneſs* are abſolutely connected; and you may very readily call to mind ſome charming things, that muſt excite the laughter of your men of *fire* and *banter*, but are by no means thought the worſe of by men of *true genius*.

genius. I will only mention Andrew Marvel's *Fawn* in Dryden's Miſcellanies. I incloſe the elegy with ſome few propoſed alterations, ſo I will not riſque the *filling* my *letter* with criticiſm. I alſo incloſe the other verſes you ſent me, which I think good ones, and to ſtand in need of little alteration, beſide that of the inglorious name at the head of them; to which, notwithſtanding, I will never ſubmit. Pray who is the young gentleman that tranſlates your elegy into Latin?—The new dreſs will give you ſome amuſement; and, if theſe lines *be* the product of the genius of a boy of that age, he will in a year's time be able to extend the fame of your compoſitions. I ſhall then be glad to ſee "The Gold-finches" under his hand; though I have no extraordinary fondneſs for the Latin poetry of a modern; at leaſt, till your eldeſt ſon begins to tranſlate our madrigals.

I HAVE not yet ſeen Mr. Thomſon's "Caſtle of "Indolence."—I waited for a ſmaller edition; but am now too impatient not to ſend for it on Thurſday next.—I am fully bent on raiſing a neat urn to him in my lower grove, if Mr. Lyttelton does not inſcribe one at Hagley *before* me. But I ſhould be extremely glad of your advice whereabouts to place it.—You ſpeak of my dwelling in the Caſtle of Indolence, and I verily believe I *do*. There is ſomething like enchantment in my preſent inactivity; for, without

any kind of lett or impediment to the correction of my trifles that I ſee, I am in no wiſe able to make the leaſt advances. I think within myſelf I could proceed if you were here; and yet I have reaſon to believe, if you *were* here, we ſhould only ramble round the groves, and chat away the time; and perhaps *that*, upon the *whole*, is of full as much importance.—I do not know but I do myſelf ſome little injuſtice here, for I *have* wrote out my *levities* and my *ſonnets*, good and bad, with many ornaments from the pencil; and the next thing I do will be to tranſcribe my elegies. The fault is, I take no pains to *improve* what I tranſcribe, and conſequently am only able to exhibit my nonſenſe in a fairer dreſs.—You muſt give me leave, ere it be long, to inſert two or three lines (I think in *verſe*) before Mrs. Jago's flower-piece.—I am ſure, I am obliged to her for a fruit I greatly love—it was not entirely ripe; but it was the only one I have taſted ſince I was laſt in London.—Yeſterday dined here Lady Luxborough, Mr. Outing and Mr. Hall, Lord Dudley, Miſs Lea, Counſellor Corbet and Mr. Saunders, Mr. Perry Mrs. Perry and Miſs Dolman, and half a dozen footmen, beſide my own ſervants and labourers; ſo you may gueſs we had no ſmall fracas. I now ſit down amid ſolitude and ſilence, and can hear little elſe beſide the pendulum of my clock;—yet my ſpirits are no way ſunk, but afford me juſt ſuch a temperature of mind as inclines me to write to ſome familiar friend;

friend: albeit I have a thouſand things to *talk* of to you, which I do not care to *write*. I hope to be able to ſpend a few days with Mr. Hardy, before his melons are all gone; and yet I would not have him keep one a *moment* longer upon *my* account. I deſire he would accept of my compliments, as I truſt he will.—Franks at preſent run low with me; but I ſend you *one*, which you cannot uſe ſo ſoon but I ſhall be able to ſend you others immediately. I wiſh I could ſend you any thing more than the means of obliging.

Sir,

Your moſt affectionate friend,

W. S.

LIV. To the ſame.

Dear Sir, Sunday, Nov. 13.

I MUST fairly own, that I have not ſate down till now to return my acknowledgments for your laſt moſt obliging favour; and yet I have been doing ſo in *imagination* almoſt every day ſince I received it. I have only to deſire that you would not think me *ſtupid*; and then you muſt of courſe conclude me hightly delighted, to find the verſes which had

ſo greatly pleaſed me, made ſo *particularly intereſting* to me. In teſtimony hereof, I have cauſed theſe my letters to be made *patent*, &c. Furthermore, I am glad to ſee you diſſent from ſome alterations I propoſed; for which, generally ſpeaking, I think I can ſee your reaſons. As to any little matter which I have to mention farther, I chuſe to defer it till I wait on Mr. Hardy; which I purpoſe to do before this month is out. It may poſſibly *happen* the beginning of the next week; but I dare not lay ſuch ſtreſs upon a future *event*, as to give you a commiſſion to ſay ſo much to *him*. Inſtead thereof, pleaſe to make him my compliments, and tell him I talk of coming *very ſoon*.

I BORROWED Dodſley's Miſcellany of Lady Luxborough, in which are many good things I long to be making a mark on the head of every copy (as I would do were the books my *own*). Here a cypher; there an aſteriſm of five points, and there one of eight.—If you, and Mr. W—, and Mr. G—, and I, were together for a fortnight, to correct and reviſe, might not we make a miſcellany of *originals* that would ſell?—My fingers itch to be at it;—but I fear it cannot be.—Thomſon's poem amuſed me greatly.—I think his plan has faults; particularly, that he ſhould have ſaid nothing of the diſeaſes attending lazineſs in his *firſt* canto, but reſerved them to ſtrike us *more affectingly* in the laſt; but, on the whole,

whole, who would have thought that Thomſon could have ſo well imitated a perſon remarkable for ſimplicity both of ſentiment and phraſe?

I STUDY no connections in a letter; and ſo I proceed to tell you, that I have got a machine to exhibit landſcapes, &c. to advantage. It coſts about fourteen ſhillings, and I recommend one to you or Mr. Hardy.—Smith's Views (with a little colouring) appear raviſhingly;—but if you are not content with *amuſement*, and want *fame* (which differs about as much as *fox*-hunting from *hare*-hunting), you muſt *print*.—However, if you can acquieſce in a *limited reputation*, to give you a proper weight at all your viſiting-places (which I think enough for all reaſonable ends and purpoſes), take the following receipt.

"A Receipt to make FAME.

"TAKE a ſhoe-maker into your parlour (that is reputed a good workman), and bid him procure a piece of red or blue Morocco leather; let him ſhape this into the ſize of a quarter of a ſheet of paper, or it may be ſomething larger. Let him double it in ſuch a manner as to leave ſome part to wrap over; then ſtitch it neatly at the ends, lining it either with ſilk or the beſt yellow leather he can meet with. Then muſt you beſpeak a ſilver claſp, which you *may* have gilded; but be ſure it be neatly *chaſed*, and properly annexed to the aforeſaid

"ſaid Morocco leather. Make a preſent of this "to the prettieſt girl you know, but filled with half "a dozen of your beſt compoſitions; take care that "one be in praiſe *of her* ingenuity. For modeſty's "ſake, deſire her not to ſhew them to any living "ſoul; but, at the ſame time, be careful that your "claſp be ſplendid, and your letter-caſe made ac-"cording to the foregoing directions."

Adieu! ſeriouſly yours,

W. S.

LV. To a Friend, diſappointing him of a Viſit.

June, 1749.

FIE on Mr. N—! he has diſappointed me of the moſt ſeaſonable viſit that heart could wiſh or deſire.—My flowers in bloſſom, my walks newly cleaned, my neighbours invited, and I languiſhing for lack of your company! Mean-time you are going to dance attendance on a courtier.—Would to God! he may diſappoint *you*, according to the uſual practice of thoſe gentlemen;—I mean, by giving you a far better living than you ever expected.

I HAVE no ſooner *made* than I am ready to *recall* that wiſh, in order to ſubſtitute another in its place;

place; which is, that you may rather ſquat yourſelf down upon a fat-gooſe living in Warwickſhire, or one in Staffordſhire, or perhaps Worceſterſhire, of the *ſame denomination*. I do not mention Shropſhire, becauſe I think I am more remote from the main body of that county than I am from either of the others. But, nevertheleſs, by all means wait on Mr. N—; ſhew him all reſpect, yet ſo as not to lay out any of the profits of your *contingent* living in a black velvet waiſtcoat and breeches to appear before him. True merit needeth nought of this. Beſides, peradventure, you may not receive the firſt quarter's income of it this half year. He will probably do ſomething for you one time or other; but you ſhall never go into Ireland, that is certain, for leſs than a deanry; not for leſs than the deanry of St. Patrick's, if you take my advice. Lower your hopes only to advance your ſurprize; "*grata* ſuper-"venient quæ non ſperabimus." Come to me *as you may*. A week is elapſed ſince you *began* to be detained; you may ſurely come over in a fortnight now at furtheſt;—I will be at home.—However, write directly; you know our letters are long upon their journey.—I expected you the beginning of every week, till I received your laſt letter, *impatiently*.

For my part, I begin to wean myſelf from all hopes and expectations whatever.—I feed my wild-

ducks,

ducks, and I water my carnations! Happy enough, if I could extinguiſh my ambition *quite*, or *indulge* (what I hope I feel in an equal degree) the deſire of being ſomething more beneficial in my ſphere.—Perhaps ſome few other circumſtances would want alſo to be adjuſted.

I HAVE juſt read Lord Bolingbroke's three letters, which I like as much as moſt pieces of politics I ever read. I admire, eſpecially, the ſpirit of the ſtyle. I as much admire *at* the editor's unpopular preface.—I know the family hitherto *ſeemed* to make it a point to conceal Pope's affair; and now, the editor, under Lord B's inſpection, not only relates, but invites people to think the worſt of it.—What *collateral* reaſons my Lord may have for thinking ill of Mr. Pope, I cannot ſay; but ſurely it is not *politic* to leſſen a perſon's character that had done one ſo much honour.

I am, dear Sir,

Your affectionate

W. SHENSTONE.

I HAVE this moment received a long letter from Lady Luxborough; and you are to look on all I ſaid concerning both Lord Bolingbroke's affair and her reſentment as premature. My Lady's daughter and ſon-in-law viſit her next week.

LVI. To

LVI. To Mr. JAGO.

From The Leasowes, as it appears on a rainy Evening, June, 1749.

Dear Sir,

IT would probably be so long before you can receive this letter by the post, that I cannot think of subjecting my *thanks for your last*, or my *hopes of seeing you soon*, to *such* an *uncertainty*.—I shall not now have it in my power to meet you at Mr. Wren's *immediately*, so would lose no time in requesting your company here *next week*, if you please. I hope Mrs. Jago also will accompany you, and that you will set out the first day of the week, even Monday; that you may not leave me in less than six days time, under a pretence of necessity. As to the verses you were so kind to convey, I will take occasion when you come

—"To find out, like a friend,
"Something to blame, and mickle to commend."

So I say no more at *present* on that head.

I LOVE to *read* verses, but I *write* none. "Petti, "nihil me sicut ante juvat scribere!"—I will not say *none*; for I wrote the following at breakfast yesterday, and they are all I have wrote since I saw you. They are now in one of the root-houses of

Virgil's Grove, for the admonition of my good friends the vulgar; of whom I have multitudes every Sunday evening, and who very fortunately believe in fairies, and are no judges of poetry:

"HERE in cool grot, and moſſy cell,
"We tripping fawns and fairies dwell:
"Tho' rarely ſeen by mortal eye,
"Oft as the moon, aſcended high,
"Darts thro' yon limes her quiv'ring beam,
"We friſk it near this cryſtal ſtream.

"THEN fear to ſpoil theſe ſacred bow'rs;
"Nor wound the ſhrubs, nor crop the flow'rs;
"So may your path with ſweets abound!
"So may your couch with reſt be crown'd!
"But ill-betide or nymph or ſwain,
"Who dares theſe hallow'd haunts profane."

OBERON.

I SUPPOSE the rotund at Hagley is compleated, but I have not ſeen it hitherto; neither do I often journey or viſit *any where*, except when a ſhrub or flower is upon the point of bloſſoming near my walks.—I forget one viſit I lately made in my neighbourhood, to a young clergyman of taſte and ingenuity. His name is Pixell; he plays *finely* upon the violin, and very well upon the harpſichord: has ſet many things to muſic, ſome in the *ſoft way*, with which I was much delighted. He is young, and has

time to improve himſelf. He gave me an opportunity of being acquainted with him by frequently viſiting, and introducing company to, my walks.—I met him one morning with an Italian in my grove, and our acquaintance has been growing ever ſince.—He has a ſhare in an eſtate that is near me, and lives there at preſent; but I doubt will not do ſo long;—when you come, I will ſend for him.—Have you read my Lord Bolingbroke's Eſſays on Patriotiſm, &c.? and have you read Merope? and do you take in the *Magazin des Londres?* and pray how does your garden flouriſh? I warrant, you do not yet know the difference betwixt a ranunculus and an anemone.—God help ye!—Come to me, and be informed of the nature of all plants, "from "the cedar on Mount Lebanon to the hyſſop that "ſpringeth out of the wall."—Pray do not fail to decorate your new garden, whence you may tranſplant all kinds of flowers into your verſes. If by chance you make a viſit at I—— fifty years hence, from ſome diſtant part of England, ſhall you forget this little angle where you uſed to muſe and ſing? "En unquam, &c. Poſt aliquot, tua regna videns "mirabere, ariſtas."

I EXPECT by the return of Tom to receive a triſle that will amuſe you. It is a ſmall gold ſeal of Vida's head, given by Vertue to a relation of mine, who publiſhed Vida, and introduced Vertue into buſineſs.—

Perhaps

Perhaps you remember Mr. Triſtram of Hampton, and the day we ſpent there from ſchool; it was his.

I am, very cordially,

Yours,

W. SHENSTONE.

LVII. To the ſame.

Dear Sir, 1749.

IT is now Sunday evening, and I have been exhibiting myſelf in my walks to no leſs than a hundred and fifty people, and that with no leſs ſtate and vanity than a Turk in his ſeraglio.—I have *ſome* hopes of ſeeing you *this* week; but if theſe ſhould happen to be fruſtrated, I ſhall find them revive with double ardour and vivacity the next. Did not you tell me of a treatiſe that your Mr. Miller had, where the author endeavours to vindicate and eſtabliſh Gothic architecture? and does not the ſame man explain it alſo by draughts on copper plates? That very book, or rather the title and the author's name, I want.—I ſhall never, I believe, be entirely partial to Goths or Vandals either; but I think, by the aſſiſtance of ſome ſuch treatiſe, I could ſketch out ſome charming Gothic temples and Gothic benches for garden-ſeats.—I do alſo eſteem it extremely

extremely ridiculous to permit another perſon to deſign *for* you, when by ſketching out your own plans you *appropriate* the merit of all you build, and feel a double pleaſure from any praiſes which it receives. —I had here laſt Wedneſday Dean Lyttelton, Mr. William Lyttelton, Commodore Weſt, Miſs Lyttelton, and Miſs Weſt. They drank tea, and went round my walks, where they ſeemed aſtoniſhed they had been ſo long ignorant of the beauties of the place; ſaid, in general, every thing that was *complaiſant* or *friendly*; and left me highly delighted with *their* viſit, and with room to hope for many more. Mean time, why do not *you* come? I *do* ſay, you are not Pylades.—What! you think, becauſe you have an agreeable wife, and five fine children, that you muſt employ all your time in careſſing them at home, or laying ſchemes for their emolument abroad? Is this public ſpirit? is this virtue? or, if it be virtue, doſt thou think, becauſe thou art *vartuous*, there muſt be no cakes and ale? is it not your duty to partake of them with a *friend* ſometimes; eaſing and relieving him under what Boileau calls,

"Le penible fardeau de n'avoir rien à faire;"

and what Pope (*ſtealing* from the former) denominates

"The pains and penalties of idleneſs."?

PRAY come the firſt day of the week, and let Mr. Fancourt accompany you.—I have not much to add by way of news. The Duke of Somerſet is going to lay out thirty thouſand pounds upon Northumberland-houſe; nine houſes to be purchaſed and pulled down on the other ſide the Strand for ſtables; the Strand there to be widened: I cannot tell you half; but one thing more I will, which is, that there will be a chapel on one ſide of the quadrangle, with a Gothic wainſcot and cieling, and painted glaſs; and ☞ in it a Dutch ſtove, contrived ſo as to look like a tomb with an urn upon it.

WHAT need I *write* all this? am I not to ſee you in a few days?—Not a word more poſitively; ſaving what may ſerve to aſſure you that I am, dear Sir,

Inviolably yours,

The Leaſowes,
July 9, 1749.

W. SHENSTONE.

LVIII. To the ſame.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Sir, Mar. 15, 1749-50.

THOUGH I have not hitherto troubled you with a letter, I have not been void either of *inquiry* or *information*, concerning the ſtate of your affairs, and of

of Mr. Hardy's health. Indeed it is now ſeveral weeks ſince I collected ſome particulars from your brother, and I am now impatient for further intelligence. As to the circumſtances of our friendly reception at Wroxall, Mr. John Jago has probably enough acquainted you with them. He *would*, however, ſeduce me to give you a diſtinct account; being aſſured, as he ſays, that Mr. Wren's behaviour muſt afford a good ſubject for drollery. I do not know how far this would be proper; but I think, when I write again to my friend Wren, to give *him* a ſketch of his own character, juſt as it appeared to us during the time of our viſit. Perhaps it may avail a little. Amidſt his violent paſſion for gardening, if he would but prune away ſome wild excreſcences from one or two branches of his character, he might bring himſelf to bear good fruit. He ſhould *weed* his *mind* a little; where there has ſprung up a moſt luxuriant crop of puns, that threaten to choak all its wholeſome productions—"Spinas animo fortius q[illegible] agro evellat." He has good ſenſe and good-nature; pity he ſhould diſguiſe them!—not but that it is better to have the *ſubſtance* alone than the *forms alone*, and ſo I conclude. Since I came home, I have done little elſe than plant buſhes, hazel, hawthorn, crabtree, elder, &c. together with ſome flowering ſhrubs that I have had given me, and ſome that I have purchaſed to the amount of twenty ſhillings. I think nothing remarkable has occurred; only, one miſerable tempeſtuous day, I

had my Lord Stamford, who called to ſee my walks. My Lord promiſed to come again in the ſummer, and invited me more than once to Enville. By the way, he is now building a Gothic green-houſe by Mr. Miller's direction, and intends to build caſtles, and God-knows-what. By all accounts, the place is well worth ſeeing when you come into the country, which I hope you will not fail to do this ſpring. Pray do not you embroil me with Mr. Miller, in regard to *any* obſervations I made in his walks. Remember, there were a great many things with which I was highly delighted; and forget that there were a few alſo which I ſeemed leſs to admire. Indeed, I thought it idle to regulate my expreſſions, amongſt friends only, by the ſame rules which I ought to obſerve in mixed company. I ſay *ought*, for *he* has been exceedingly favourable to *me* in his repreſentation of The Leaſowes. —I hope to ſee Mr. Fancourt with you, when you come this ſpring; and why not your brother? he can ſpend half a week every now and then at Wroxall.

I HAVE nothing to *inſert* or *incloſe* in this letter that can render it at all agreeable.—I cannot *write*, I cannot *think*. I can juſt muſter up attention enough to give orders to my workmen; I ſaunter about my grounds, take ſnuff, and read Clariſſa. This laſt part of my employment threatens to grow extremely *tedious*: not but the author is a man of *genius* and *nice obſervation*; but he might be leſs *prolix*. I will ſend

you

you "The Life of Socrates" when I can get it home from Barrels. I wiſh both your circumſtances and mine would allow of an utter *inattention* to them; and then, I believe, our natural indolence would be a kind of match for our ambition. I ſhall probably enlarge my acquaintance this year; but what *doth* it? the circle of my friends with whom I can be *eaſy*, and *amuſed* much, will continue ſmall as ever. I could dwell a good deal upon this ſubject; but I have only room to deſire you would give me your opinion how I ſhould inſcribe my urn to Mr. Somervile. "Author of The "Chace" cannot be tolerably expreſſed in Latin without a circumlocution. I aim at brevity, and would therefore omit it. Pray read over the ſpecimens I have thrown together, and *oblige* me with a ſpeedy anſwer, if it extend to nothing elſe beſides yours and Mrs. Jago's health, which I ought at this time more particularly to enquire after. I am

Your moſt affectionate
and faithful friend,
W. SHENSTONE.

LIX. To the ſame.

Dear Sir, June 11, 1750.

I ACKNOWLEDGE myſelf obliged to you for procuring me the pictures. I received them both very ſafe, as I have a pretty ſtrong aſſurance I *ſhall* do moſt

articles of which my ſervant Tom has the care.—He has punctuality and management, to *atone* for his *imperfections*. He brought me thoſe paper-ſculled buſts from Wroxall entirely unhurt, contrary to the expectation of all that ſaw them; after which, he might undertake for almoſt any thing.—The portrait is undoubtedly a good one. I ſhewed it to Mr. Smart (who is a painter himſelf, though a clergyman), and he allowed as much; added alſo, that it had ſomething of Sir Godfrey Kneller, as well as of Sir Peter Lely.—The flower-piece is very good, ſo far as relates to the flowers; the dog and parrot abominable, and the grapes very exceptionable. I never conſidered the two flower-pieces at Icheneton with attention enough to cauſe a preference; having never any thoughts that *either* would fall to my ſhare. I ſhall add nothing with regard to your choice; but that I ſincerely *hope* yours is the better piece. I never heard of Caſteels, I own; nor can I find his name in any of my accounts of the painters, though they take in pretty modern ones: but I can ſay this for your comfort, that if he excelled in any thing, it was probably in flowers: for I ſee his name at the bottom of thoſe flower-pieces that I have in water colours, as the deſigner of them; and I think the deſigns are good. Though I could wiſh neither the Cupid nor the fruit-piece had eſcaped us, yet is there no blame to be laid at your door; at leaſt ſuppoſing that you are endowed with nothing more than ra-

tional

tional conjecture, and that you are not gifted with prophesy.

And now, having spoken, I think, to *most* parts of your letter, I proceed to say a word or two in the way of appendix. First then, after five or six weeks work of masons and carpenters, I plainly discover that my house is an unfinishable thing;—and yet, I persuade myself, there will never be wanting a room in it, where you may spend an agreeable day with your undoubted friend.—Did I ever tell you how *unseasonably* the three fiddles struck up in my grove about an hour after you left me; and how a set of ten bells was heard from my wood the evening after? It might have passed for the harmony of some aërial spirit, who was a well-wisher to us poor mortals; but that I think, had it been so, it would have been addressed to the *better sort*, and of consequence have been heard whilst *you* were *here*. This by way of introduction to what I am going to tell you. Mr. Pixell has made an agreement with his club at Birmingham, to give me a day's music in some part of my walks. The time is not yet fixed; but, if you were an idle man, and could be brought over at a day or two's notice, I would give it you, and be in hopes I could entertain you very agreeably.

You cannot think how much you gratified my vanity when you were here, by saying, that if this place were yours, you thought you should be less able to keep within the bounds of *œconomy* than myself.—God knows, it is pain and grief to me to observe her rules at *all*; and *rigidly* I never can.—How is it possible to possess improveable scenes, and not wish to improve them? and how is it possible, with œconomy, to be at the expence of improving them upon my fortune? To be continually in fear of excess in perfecting every trifling design, how irksome! to be restrained from attempting *any*, how vexatious! so that I never can enjoy my situation—that is certain.—Oeconomy, that invidious old matron! on occasion of every frivolous expence, makes such a hellish squawling, that the murmur of a cascade is utterly lost to me.—Often do I cry out with Cowley,

"O rivers! brooks! when, when in *you*, shall I
"Myself, eas'd of *un-peaceful* thoughts, espy!
"O woods and groves! when, when shall I be
"made
"The happy tenant of your shade!"

PAPER fails: abruptly therefore, but sincerely and affectionately,

I am, dear Sir,

Yours,

W. SHENSTONE.

LX. To

LX. To C—— W——, Esq.

Dear Sir, The Leasowes, Sept. 9, 1750.

PRAY, is laziness an excuse for not writing? Tell me.—However, if it be so, I am afraid I shall want an excuse for laziness; like the philosopher, who, supposing the world might rest upon a tortoise's back, found himself no less embarrassed for a pedestal to support his tortoise. I have, indeed, been pretty busy at home in raising a pool-dam, and have interchanged a few visits with such of my acquaintance as live within three miles.—What then? —I abominate all excuses that are grounded upon the business or amusements of an idle man—as if such a person's time was so wholly filled up, that he could not find half an hour to write a line to his friend. It is best to acknowledge laziness at first, and that there are particular intervals, when one is much less disposed to write even a few lines than at others; and then, as to laziness, one has nothing to do but to plead human frailty; which, if a person has not too many frailties besides, may perhaps be indulged him. However, "Veniam petimusque, "damusque," will not fail to weigh with every good-natured man. The chief dealing I have with Harris the Jew is, for the intelligence which he brings me concerning you and Mrs. W—; but it seldom amounts

to

to much more than that you are well, and in your garden.

He is an Ebrew Jew, or he would tell me you had purchaſed a couple of genteel horſes, or a chaiſe and pair, and were coming over to The Leaſowes to ſpend a week with me.

Nevertheless, I hope to ſee you ſoon: but *en paſſant* I aſſure you, I ſhall go in about a month to Mr. Jago's, and from thence to Mr. Miller's; who, I believe I told you, was here, with Mr. Lyttelton, Lady Ayleſbury, Colonel Conway, &c. I think I never anſwered your query concerning Colonel Lyttelton.—He is the ſame perſon that you remember, and your propheſy concerning him has been literally accompliſhed. He is a man of courage, genius, generoſity, and politeneſs; has been fortunate in the world; was made a Colonel at about ſix and twenty; diſtinguiſhed himſelf in ſeveral campaigns; married the Dutcheſs of Bridgewater; and had the other day about ſixteen thouſand pounds left him by Colonel Jefferies, a very diſtant relation. He has a ſeat, and ſpeaks, in the Houſe of Commons; has bought a town and country-houſe, the latter of which he is ornamenting in the modern way. His Dutcheſs the moſt unceremonious even-tempered woman that lives.—So enjoy the ſpirit of propheſy, and exert it again.—It needs little more than

than good ſenſe. Which of the hiſtorians is it, that foretold in his hiſtory a very remarkable ſeries of events, by dint of this alone, and which were all accompliſhed? Let me know what you are doing now. Have you repaired the farm-houſe you talked of?—and have you remembered to make the man a couple of good large niches in his chimney corner, where he and his family may ſpend a more comfortable evening than was ever ſpent by any firſt miniſter in Chriſtendom—perhaps alſo converſe more to the purpoſe? You tell me nothing of your Mr. Jago, Seignior Benedict, the new-married man. Tell him to leave his wife and family for a day or two, ſaddle his mule, and come over to The Leaſowes. —Tell him, all pleaſures are heightened by a little diſcontinuance.—Tell him, did I ſay?—*how* can you for ſhame adviſe him ſo contrarily to your own practice?

Believe me, dear Sir,

Very faithfully yours,

W. Shenstone.

LXI. To

LXI. To the ſame.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Sir, Nov. 2, 1750.

IT never can be that I owe you for three letters; as to two, I will agree with you; one that I received together with my books, and the other ſoon after; but that I am indebted for more than theſe —

"Credat Judæus Apella,
"Non ego."

Even that ſame "Judæus Apella" who affords me this very opportunity of ſending my compliments to you and Mrs. W—, and of aſſuring you, that if I had not purpoſed to have ſeen you, I had wrote to you long ago.

MASTER Harris talks very reſpectfully of your garden; and we have no diſpute, ſave only in one point—he ſays, that you labour very hard in your vocation; whereas I am not willing to allow that all the work you ever did, or will do in it, is worth a ſingle bunch of radiſhes. However, I dare not contradict him too much, becauſe he waits for my letter.

How happy are you, that can hold up your ſpade, and cry, "Avaunt, Satan!" when a toyman offers you

you his deceitful vanities! Do not you rejoice inwardly, and pride yourself greatly in your own philosophy?

"'Twas thus—
"The wise Athenian crossed a glitt'ring fair:
"Unmov'd by tongues and sights he walk'd the
"place,
"Thro' tape, tags, tinsel, gimp, perfume, and
"lace;
"Then bends from Mars's Hill his awful eyes,
"And, "What a world I never want!" he cries."
PARNELL.

Mean time, do not despise others that can find any needful amusement in what, I think, Bunyan very aptly calls *Vanity Fair*; I have been at it many times this season, and have bought many kinds of merchandize there. It is a part of philosophy, to adapt one's passions to one's way of life; and the solitary unsocial sphere in which I move makes me think it happy, that I can retain a relish for such trifles as I can draw into it. Mean time, I dare not reason too much upon this head. Reason, like the famous concave mirrour at Paris, would, in two minutes, vitrify all the Jew's pack: I mean, that it would immediately destroy all the form, colour, and beauty, of every thing that is not merely useful.—

uſeful.—But I ramble too far, and you do not want ſuch ſpeculations. My intent, when I ſat down, was to tell you, that I ſhall probably ſee you very ſoon, and certainly remain in the mean time, and at all times, Sir,

Your obliged

and very faithful ſervant,

W. SHENSTONE.

LXII. To a Friend, on various Subjects.

Dear Mr. ——,

WITH the utmoſt gratitude for the obſervations which you ſent me, and with the higheſt opinion of their propriety in general, do I ſit down to anſwer your obliging letter. You will not take it amiſs, I know, if I ſcribble broken hints, and trace out little ſketches of my mind, juſt as I ſhould go near to explain it if I were upon the ſpot, as often as I think of you, which I beg leave to aſſure you happens many times in a day. They ſay, "A word to the wiſe is enough;" a word, therefore, to a friend of underſtanding may be ſuppoſed to be ſomething more than enough, becauſe it is probable he is acquainted with three parts of one's mind

mind before—The cenſure you have paſſed upon Milton's Lycidas, ſo far as it regards the metre which he has choſen, is unexceptionably juſt; and one would imagine, if that argument concerning the diſtance of the rhimes were preſſed home in a public eſſay, it ſhould be ſufficient to extirpate that kind of verſe for ever. As to my opinion concerning the choice of Engliſh metre, I dare not touch upon the ſubject; and I will give you my reaſon: I began upon it in a letter which I intended for you about a month ago; and I ſoon found that I had filled a ſheet of paper with my diſſertation, and left no room for other things which I had more mind to communicate. Beſide, I found it ſo blotted that I did not chuſe to ſend it; and as the ſubject is ſo extremely copious, I ſhall decline it entirely, till *talking* may prove as effectual as *writing*.—As to your advice with regard to my publications, I believe it to be juſt, and ſhall, in all probability, purſue it.—I am afraid, by your account, that Dodſley has publiſhed my name to "The School-miſtreſs." I was a good deal diſpleaſed at his publiſhing that poem without my knowledge, when he had ſo many opportunities of giving me ſome previous information; but, as he would probably diſregard my reſentment, I choſe to ſtifle it, and wrote to him directly upon the receipt of yours, that I would be glad to furniſh him with an improved copy of "The School-miſtreſs," &c. for his ſecond edition. He accepts it with ſome

complaiſance, deſires it ſoon; and I am at a fault to have the opinion of my friends, what alterations or additions it will be proper to inſert. I have ſcribbled a copy, which I ſend this day to Mr. Graves and Mr. Whiſtler; but I am greatly fearful I ſhall not receive their criticiſms time enough, and I ſhall have the ſame longing for yours. A journey to Whitchurch, which I have long propoſed, might unite all theſe advantages; and I heartily wiſh I may be able to effect it without inconvenience. If I go thither, I call on you.

I am,

ever and entirely, yours,

W. SHENSTONE.

LXIII. To the ſame.

The Leaſowes,
Mar. 28, 1751.

Dear Sir,

WHAT a ſtupid fool was I, to ſhew you thoſe letters of my friend Graves, wherein he declares himſelf ſo freely againſt a regular correſpondence! See the effects of it! You have taken immediate advantage of his example, and I muſt never more expect an anſwer to any letter that I ſend you,

I in

in leſs than half a century. I wrote to you after I came home, to thank you for all your kindneſs at I——, &c.; but not a ſyllable have I been able to receive from you, or a word that I could hear concerning you. I could, however, very eaſily convince you, that Mr. Graves (your precedent) is not altogether ſo hardened an offender as you may imagine. His laſt letter is a very affectionate recantation. I incloſe that part of it which regards Mr. F—.

WHAT a number of ſchemes are irreparably broken by the ſudden death of the Prince of Wales! Yours, my good friend, which ſeems to be deſtroyed amongſt the reſt, has, I think, of late given you no ſolicitude. Your intereſt in Mr. N— will remain the ſame, I ſuppoſe; and if he would but ſerve you nearer *home*, I will have no ſort of quarrel with him that he did not tranſplant you into Cornwall.—It is at leaſt ſome gratification to a perſon's ſelf-love, when one finds the more *ambitious* hopes of more *aſpiring* people as liable to be ſuddenly extinguiſhed as one's own. However, the death of the Prince gave me a good deal of concern, though it no way affected my *particular* intereſt, as he had all the humane, affable, and generous qualities, which could recommend him to one's *affection*.

Mr. Graves has ſent me two copies of verſes. One on Medals, to Mr. Walker; and the other, on the late Memoirs of the London Heroines, Lady V—, Mrs. Pilkington, and Mrs. Phillips. Both good in their way, which you ſhall ſee when you come over.

Have you ſeen the firſt books of "The Scribleriad," by Mr. Cambridge?—The "Verſes written in a Coun-"try Church-yard?"—Mr. W. Whitehead's "Ode to "the Nymph of Briſtol Spring?"—or, what *have* you ſeen?—You live infinitely more in the world than I do; who hear nothing, ſee nothing, do nothing, and *am* nothing. Remedy this unhappineſs, by ſending me ſomewhat that may rouſe my attention.—I muſt except what I hear from my Lady Luxborough, who indulges me now and then with a letter in French.

If you ſhould think this letter more than uſually *dull*, you muſt know, that, ſince I ſaw you, I have been *generally* diſpirited; till about a fortnight ago I found ſome nervous diſorders that I greatly diſliked, and upon examination was told I had a nervous fever. For this I have been taking ſaline draughts and bolus's, and *hope* I am ſomething better; though I am far from well. I would not indeed have written to you at this time, but I choſe not to defer ſending the incloſed poſtſcript.—You

who have ſhared many of my *happieſt* hours, will excuſe the produce of a more than ordinarily dull one.

Mrs. Arnold comes up to enquire after my health, and wiſhes I may get better, that I may ſtir out and ſee the *pretty creatures in the barn*. It ſeems, ſhe has a cow or two that have calved ſince I kept my room.

Why ſhould I prolong a letter that has no kind of chance to afford you any amuſement? Make my compliments to Mrs. ——, and believe me to be ever moſt affectionately

Yours,

W. Shenstone.

I have juſt taken and ſigned a leaſe for life of the terrace beyond my wood, for which I am to pay annually the ſum of one ſhilling.—Am not I a man of great worldly importance, to purchaſe ground and take leaſes thus?—What matters it whether the articles that *ſecure* the premiſes to me would alſo *cover* them or not?

My ſervice to Mr. F—t;—why will he not come and ſpend a week with me?—I think you cannot both be abſent at a time.

LXIV. To Mr. Graves.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, Feb. 16, 1750-1.

SINCE I received your letter, I have been a week at W—. I believe I may have told you, that I never was ſond of that place. There is too much trivial elegance, too much punctilio for me; and perhaps, as you expreſs it, too much *ſpeculation*. But I was fearful I might entirely loſe Mr. Whittler's acquaintance, if I did not make an effort once in five years to return his viſit. Beſides, I ſhould have had no hopes of ſeeing him at The Leaſowes hereafter; and I am extremely deſirous of ſeeing both *him* and *you* here, having made many alterations which I do not undertake but with an eye to the approbation of my more ingenious friends; but he ſeems, to my great ſurprize, to renounce the thing called *taſte* in buildings, gardens, &c. is grown weary of his own little embelliſhments at W—, and longs to ſettle in London for the greater part of his time. This, I believe, he would put in execution immediately; but that he thinks it might give ſome uneaſineſs to his mother, if he ſhould quit the houſe that ſhe with ſo much difficulty obtained for him. *I* too am ſick of the word *taſte*; but I think the *thing* itſelf the only proper *ambition*, and the *ſpecific pleaſure* of all who have any ſhare in the faculty of imagination. I need not mention my reaſons; you

will ſoon conceive them. And, however the caſe be, there is one branch of it which ſo totally engroſſes the perſons with whom I principally converſe, that I was aſtoniſhed to hear him ſpeak even with indifference concerning the reigning taſte for rural decorations. I could ill forbear telling Mr. Whiſtler, that he was now *litterally* a beau in a bandbox; but the freedom might have given more offence than the joke was worth. He has improved the place extremely; but I do not like his colonnades. You know, nothing of that kind is tolerable, unleſs regularly executed in ſtone: that is one thing. Another is, that colonnades are ornaments which will not *bear* to be very *diminutive*. Mr. —— (whoſe houſe only I ſaw) has been at the expence of a large cornice round it, in moſt elaborate brickwork; but with regard to his ſtucco-work *within* doors, he is quite *extravagant*.—I mention theſe things upon a ſuppoſition that you may like to hear *any* thing that regards the place; but indeed they are ſo mighty trifling, that I ought to doubt my ſuppoſition. I ſupped with Mr. P——'s family once at Mr. W——'s, and once at Mr. W—'s, and all was mighty well; only I happen to have a violent averſion to card-playing, and at W—— I think they do nothing *elſe*: ſo that, on account of my ignorance at quadrille, or any creditable game, I was forced to loſe my money, and two evenings out of my ſeven, at Pope Joan with Mr.

P——'s children. Mr. W——, to make me amends, invited me to breakfaſt, and ſhewed me your verſes. I aſſure you, you have no occaſion for a better advocate than Mr. W—; whether with regard to his *judgement*, or his zeal in behalf of the ſubject, the verſes, or the poet. I would fain have obtained a copy; but he did not care to give one without your commiſſion. I hope *you* will oblige me ſo far. I like them very much; the ſubject is genteel, and the verſes eaſy and elegant. We agreed upon one or two different readings; and one ſtanza that concerns cards ſhould, I think, be corrected. Not that I would have you leſs ſevere upon cards neither; I was even glad to find, that you gave them ſo little quarter. I ſometimes thought that Mr. W—'s ſeeming fondneſs for them was a kind of *contre-cœur*.—Be that as it will, his objection to the ſtanza, as well as mine, was ſolely founded on the verſification, not the ſentiment. I liked his Latin verſes; but they do not interfere with yours. Send me a copy, and confine my uſe of it by what limitations you pleaſe. My reigning toy at preſent is a pocket-book; and I glory as much in furniſhing it with the verſes of my acquaintance, as others would with bank-bills. I did not know when I went to W—, but I might have heard Mrs. G— *accuſed of certain queſtions touching their law* (I mean of forms and ceremonies); but I did *not*. On the contrary, I had the ſatisfaction of

hearing

hearing her perſon, her temper, and her underſtanding, much commended; but this I did not want: the delicacy of your taſte is equal with me to a thouſand commendations. Mrs. W— is really ſo much altered by her indiſpoſition, that I did not know her. She talks of going to Bath this ſeaſon; —I talked of it too, and wiſh it of all earthly things. You muſt know, I could not have come to Claverton *inſtead* of going to W—, as I did not determine on the expedition at home; but at a friend's houſe, where I was betwixt twenty and thirty miles on my way thither. Beſides, I would allow myſelf more time when I turn my face towards Bath, than I could this winter. Your invitation, as it is very obliging, ſo it has many concurring circumſtances to recommend it at this time. I want to recover my health, which muſt be recovered by Bath, or *nothing*; I want to have you read ſome trifles of mine, which muſt be ratified by you, or *no one*; but principally, and above all, do I long to ſee you, my old friend, and Mrs. G—, whom I expect you ſhould render my new one.—I am obliged for your charitable endeavours to ſupport my ſpirits. Your company would do it effectually, but ſcarce any thing leſs, in *winter*. Solitary life, limited circumſtances, a phlegmatic habit, and diſagreeable events, have given me a melancholy turn, that is hardly diſſipated by the moſt ſerene ſky; but in a north-eaſt wind is quite intolerable. After a long ſtate of this kind, upon

every acceſs of amuſement, one is apt to think it is not *right* to be happy; that it is one of Wollaſton's implicit lyes; a treating things contrary to what they *deſerve*.—Your ſituation at Claverton is admired by moſt people; and, if you could connect ſome little matter in the neighbourhood, would be as ſurely envied.

It is now high time to releaſe you.—This is not a letter, but an olio. I deſire my compliments to Mrs. G—, and am affectionately and invariably

Yours,

W. Shenstone.

As I muſt now uſe a frank, I will ſend you a few inſcriptions: your imagination will ſupply the ſcenery, on which what merit they may have depends. There *were* different readings in the firſt copy, of which I beg your opinion.

Stanza the firſt.

"At leaſt this calm ſequeſter'd ſhade
"Ambition never dares invade
"No, &c.
"But ſhuns, &c."

Stanza the ſecond.

"Hither the plaintive *halcyon hies*,
"Avoiding all the race that flies."

My

My deſign was only to convey ſome pleaſing ideas of things, which, though proper to the place, a perſon might not chance to ſee there once in twenty times. Mr. Lyttelton and Lady Aylesbury *neceſſitated* me to give them copies, though they probably did it out of complaiſance only: I gave them in the manner I ſend them you. I hope *you* have not entirely dropt your love for rural ſcenes, of which you were once ſo fond. I will allow your taſte for medals to preponderate.—I beg, dear Sir, you would neglect no *opportunity* of calling on me.—I will come to Claverton when I can.

LXV. To a Friend.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. G—, Sept. 17, 1751.

I AM very ſenſibly obliged to you for the *diligence* and *expedition* which you have ſhewn in anſwering my late requeſt: I cannot feel the very *tenderneſs* of friendſhip to be at all abated in me by our long ſeparation; nor will it at any time be poſſible I ſhould, ſo long as I receive ſuch teſtimonies of your uſual *kindneſs* and *ingenuity*.—I have no ſort of exceptions to make againſt the province in which you were engaged at Cheltenham, nor the light in which you appeared. What you loſt in any one's opinion,

of

of your independency, you would gain in their idea of your merit, genius, and learning; and then you had all thoſe other advantages *par deſſu*.—As to the compliments that were paid to Mrs. G—, you have ſomething of the ſame ſort of reaſon to be pleaſed with them, that I have to be pleaſed with thoſe that are given to my place; which I conſider as naturally poſſeſſed of many beauties, each of them brought to light and perfected through my own diſcernment, care, and cultivation. And then your pleaſure ought to be ſo much greater than mine, as you have a nobler ſubject to enjoy.—Mrs. G— has too much ſenſe to object againſt the freedom of this ſimilitude.

I CANNOT help adding a few ſtrokes to your picture of Mrs. S—. I think her an extremely *ſuperficial* female-pedant: for, after an interval of many years ſince I firſt converſed with her at Mr. ——'s, I found her converſation turn ſolely upon the ſame *topics*, *definitions*, and *quotations*. I believe, I could eaſily enough have recommended myſelf to a greater degree of her favour; but her vanity and affectations were beyond what I could bear.—Your account of —— is very pictureſque, and agreeable to the idea I always had of him; but I believe that idea was perfected by what obſervations I made when I had ſome of his company at London.—There was ſomething accountable enough to me in their burleſquing

leſquing Mr. L—'s monody. He is, you know, engaged in a party; and his poem (though an extraordinary fine compoſition) was too tender for the public ear. It ſhould have been printed privately, and a number of copies diſperſed only among their friends and acquaintance;—but even ſo it would have been re-publiſhed; and it was too good to ſuppreſs. I wiſh the burleſquers of ſuch *ingenuous* profuſions could be puniſhed, conſiſtently with Engliſh liberty. "Where were ye, Muſes, &c." is imitated from Milton, and taken by Milton from Theocritus. I write Greek wretchedly; but you will remember the paſſage,

Πᾶ ποκ' ἄρ' ἦσθ' ὄφρα Δάφνις ἰτάκησε; πᾶ πόκα, Νύμφαι;

I HEARD, once before, it was burleſqued under the title of "An Elegy on the Death of a favou-"rite Cat;" but the burleſque will die, and the poem will ſurvive.—You tell me, "The Author of "Peregrine Pickle ſays, if you will flatter Mr. Lyt-"telton well, he will at laſt make you a Middleſex "Juſtice;" and it happened oddly that, whilſt I was reading your letter, a neighbour told me, I was put in the commiſſion of the peace. I have never received a ſingle line from Mr. Whittler, and I believe my journey to W— has given the final blow to our friendſhip. Pray was not Mr. Blandy ſome relation of theirs, or only their attorney? The unfair

fair is uncommonly ſhocking; and I fancy the *genuine* accounts that Mr. W— ſends you will be curious anecdotes at Bath.—I ſuppoſe you have painted your room with oil colours, and made it *really* handſome.—I drew out a feſtoon and a medal ſome time ago, for a pannel over Mr. P—'s chimney; but they knew not what to make of the medal, and had only the feſtoon executed in ſtone colour, by a common painter;—yours is better, and in character.—I am a degree more frugal than you; for I only uſe quick lime, and either blue or yellow ſand, to take away the objection which I have to whited walls.

I PAID a viſit to Mr. Lyttelton, the Dean, &c. ſince he came down; but had little of their company, for they thought Sir Thomas was dying: however, by unparalleled ſtrength of conſtitution, he lingered in violent pain till laſt Saturday, when he died, very much lamented. He had good natural parts, well improved by reading modern writers, and by the knowledge of the world: extremely prudent, conſiderate, humane, polite, and charitable.—I have jumbled his more obvious qualities together, that you may not think I am uſurping the province of a news-man. Sir George will loſe no time in building a new houſe, or doing what is more than *equivalent* to the old one.

I WANT

I WANT no *temptation* to come immediately to C—. This is a melancholy *ſeaſon* with me always; whether it be owing to the ſcenes I ſee, or to the effect of hazy ſkies upon an ill-perſpiring ſkin.—I can ſay no more at *preſent*, than that I moſt ardently deſire to ſee you, and deſire my humble ſervice to Mrs. G—. I have a chalybeat ſpring in the middle of my grotto: what think you of this inſcription?

"FONS FERRVGINEVS
"DIVARVM OPTVMAE
"SALVTI SACER."

Is it antique?

I am, dear Mr. G—,

Your moſt affectionate

W. SHENSTONE.

LXVI. To Mr. GRAVES, on the Death of Mr. SHENSTONE's Brother.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, Feb. 14, 1752.

YOU will be amazed at my long ſilence; and it might reaſonably excite ſome diſguſt if my days had paſſed of late in the manner they uſed to do: but I am not the man I was; perhaps I never *ſhall*

ſhall be. Alas! my deareſt friend! I have loſt my only brother! and, ſince the fatal cloſe of November, I have had neither peace nor reſpite from agonizing thoughts!

You, I think, have *ſeen* my brother; but perhaps had no opportunity of diſtinguiſhing him from the groupe of others whom we call *good-natured* men. This part of his character was ſo viſible in his countenance, that he was generally beloved at ſight; *I*, who muſt be allowed to know him, do aſſure you, that his underſtanding was no way inferior to his benevolence. He had not only a ſound judgement, but a lively wit and genuine humour. As theſe were many-times eclipſed by his native baſhfulneſs, ſo his benevolence only ſuffered by being ſhewn to an exceſs. I here mean his giving too indiſcriminately into thoſe jovial meetings of company, where the warmth of a ſocial temper is diſcovered with leaſt reſerve; but the virtues of his head and heart would ſoon have ſhone without alloy. The foibles of his youth were wearing off; and his affection for me and regard to my advice, with his own good ſenſe, would ſoon have rendered him all that I could have wiſhed in a ſucceſſor. I never in my life knew a perſon more ſincere in the expreſſion of his love or diſlike. But it was the *former* that ſuited the propenſity of his heart; the *latter* was as tranſient as the ſtarts of paſſion that occaſioned it. In ſhort,

with

with much true genius and real fortitude, he was, according to the *Engliſh* acceptation, "a truly honeſt man;" and I think I may alſo add, a truly Engliſh character; but "habeo, dixi? immo *habui* "fratrem & amicum, Chreme!" All this have I *loſt* in him. He is now in regard to *this* world no more than a mere idea; and this idea, therefore, though deeply tinged with melancholy, I muſt, and ſurely *ought* to, cheriſh and preſerve.

I BELIEVE I wrote you ſome account of his illneſs laſt ſpring; from which to all appearance he was tolerably well recovered. He took the air, and viſited about with me, during the warmer months of ſummer; but my pleaſure was of ſhort duration. "Hæſit lateri lethalis arundo!" The peripneumony under which he laboured in the ſpring had terminated in an adheſion of the lungs to the pleura, ſo that he could never lie but upon his right ſide; and this, as the weather grew colder, occaſioned an obſtruction that could never be ſurmounted.

THOUGH my reaſon forewarned me of the event, I was not the more prepared for it.—Let me not dwell upon it.—It is altogether inſupportable in *every reſpect*; and my imagination ſeems more aſſiduous in educing pain from this occaſion, than I ever yet found it in adminiſtering to my pleaſure.—This hurts me to no purpoſe—I know it; and yet, when

when I have avocated my thoughts, and fixed them for a while upon common amuſements, I ſuffer the ſame ſort of conſciouſneſs as if I were guilty of a crime. Believe me, this has been the moſt ſenſible affliction I ever felt in my life; and you, who know my anxiety when I had far leſs reaſon to complain, will more eaſily *conceive* it now, than I am able to deſcribe it.

I CANNOT pretend to fill up my paper with my uſual ſubjects.—I ſhould thank you for your remarks upon my poetry; but I deſpiſe poetry: and I might tell you of all my little rural improvements; but I hate them.—What can I now expect from my ſolitary rambles through them, but a ſeries of melancholy reflections and irkſome anticipations? —Even the pleaſure I ſhould take in ſhewing them to *you*, the greateſt they can afford me, muſt be now greatly inferior to what it might formerly have been.

How have I proſtituted my ſorrow on occaſions that little concerned me! I am aſhamed to think of that idle "Elegy upon Autumm," when I have ſo much more important cauſe to hate and to condemn it *now*; but the glare and gaiety of the Spring is what I *principally* dread; when I ſhall find all things reſtored, but my poor brother, and ſomething like thoſe lines of Milton will run for ever in my thoughts:

"Thus,

"Thus, with the year,
"*Seasons* return; but not to *me* returns
"A brother's cordial smile, at eve or morn."

I shall then seem to wake from amusements, company, every *sort* of inebriation with which I have been endeavouring to lull my grief asleep, as from a dream; and I shall feel as if I were, *that instant*, despoiled of all I have chiefly valued for thirty years together; of all my present happiness, and all my future prospects. The melody of birds, which he no more must hear; the cheerful beams of the sun, of which he no more must partake; *every* wonted pleasure will produce that *sort* of pain to which my temper is most obnoxious. Do not consider this as poetry.—Poetry on such occasions is no more than literal truth. In the present case it is *less*; for half the tenderness I feel is altogether shapeless and inexpressible.

After all, the wisdom of the world may perhaps esteem me a gainer. Ill do they judge of this event, who think that any shadow of amends can be made for the death of a brother, and the disappointment of all my schemes, by the accession of some fortune, which I never can enjoy!

This is a mournful narrative: I will not, therefore, enlarge it.—Amongst all changes and chances, I often think of you; and pray there may be no

 suspicion

ſuſpicion or jealouſy betwixt us during the reſt of our lives.

I am, dear Sir,

moſt affectionately yours,

W. SHENSTONE.

LXVII. To C— W—, Eſq.

ALAS! dear Mr. W—! the terrible event has happened! I have loſt the beſt of brothers; and you are to pity, not to condemn, your unfortunate correſpondent.

ABOUT the middle of November I had prepared a letter for you, which lies now amongſt my papers. At that time, amidſt all my apprehenſions, I had ſome hopes to ſupport me; but before I could ſend it, my ſituation was greatly altered, and the month did not wholly expire, till it had effectually rendered me the moſt wretched of mankind.

THUS much it was neceſſary I ſhould tell you; you will pardon me, if I do not deſcend any farther into an account of merit that is loſt, and of ſorrow which is too apt to revive of itſelf. Be aſſured, it is to me a loſs which the whole world cannot compenſate;

penſate; and an affliction which the longeſt time I can live will not be able to eraſe.

You ſaid, you would let Maſter W—come and ſpend a few days with me.—I beſeech you do.—It will be ſome relief to me; and, God knows, I have occaſion enough for every aſſiſtance that can be drawn from correſpondence, company, or amuſement.

You, Sir, I preſume, proceed in the innocent recreations of your garden, and thoſe may at leaſt prove a balance for any ſmall diſquiets that attend you. If greater ills befal you, you have perſons near you to alleviate them—a wife, family, viſitants male and female, friends in abundance, and a table ſufficiently hoſpitable to attract even your enemies. With me the caſe is otherwiſe. What I have undergone this winter, may you never feel ſo much as in apprehenſion!

Believe me, my friend,

affectionately and invariably yours,

IX Kal. March,
MDCCLII. W. SHENSTONE.

LXVIII. To the ſame.

Dear Mr. W—, ... July 22, 1752.

I DO not know why I made you a promiſe of a pretty long letter. What I now write will be but a moderate one, both in regard to length and ſtile; yet write I muſt, *par maniere d'acquit*, and you have brought four-pence expence upon yourſelf for a parcel of nonſenſe, and to no manner of purpoſe. This is not tautology, you muſt obſerve; for nonſenſe ſometimes anſwers very conſiderable purpoſes. —In love, it is eloquence itſelf.—In friendſhip, therefore, by all the rules of ſound logic, you muſt allow it to be ſomething; what I cannot ſay, "hequeo "mouſtrare, & ſentio tantum." The principal part of a correſpondence betwixt two idle men conſiſts in two important enquiries—what we do, and how we do; but as all perſons ought to give ſatisfaction before they expect to receive it, I am to tell you in the firſt place, that my own health is tolerably good, or rather what I muſt call good, being, I think, much better that it has been this laſt half-year.—Then as touching my occupation, alas! "Othello's oc- "cupation's gone!" I neither read nor write aught beſides a few letters; and I give myſelf up entirely to ſcenes of diſſipation; lounge at my Lord Dudley's for near a week together; make dinners; accept of invitations; ſit up till three o'clock in the morning with

with young ſprightly married women, over white port and *vin de payſans*; ramble over my fields; iſſue out orders to my hay-makers; foretel rain and fair weather; enjoy the fragance of hay, the cocks, and the wind-rows; admire that univerſal lawn which is produced by the ſcythe; ſometimes inſpect, and draw mouldings for my carpenters; ſometimes paper my walls, and at other times my cielings; do every ſocial office that falls in my way, but never ſeek out for any.

"SED vos quid tandem? quæ circumvolitas agilis "thyma? non tu corpus eras ſine pectore. Non "tibi parvum ingenium, non incultum eſt!" In ſhort, what do you? and how do you do?—that is all.

TELL my young pupil, your ſon, he muſt by all manner of means ſend me a Latin letter: and if he have any billet in French for Miſs Lea at The Grange, or even in Hebrew, Coptic, or Syriac, I will engage it ſhall be received very graciouſly. Thither am I going to dinner this day, and there "implebor veteris Bacchi, pinguiſque ferinæ."

ALL this looks like extreme jollity; but is this the true ſtate of the caſe, or may I not more properly apply the

"Spem vultu ſimulat, premit atrum corde do-
"lorem?"

Accept this ſcrawl in place of a letter, and believe me

Ever moſt affectionately yours,

W. Shenstone.

LXIX. To Mr. G—, on the Receipt of his Picture.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. G—, Oct. 3, 1752.

I AM very unfeignedly aſhamed to reflect how long it is ſince I received your preſent, and how much longer it is ſince I received your letter. I have been reſolving to write to you almoſt daily ever ſince you left me; yet have fooliſhly enough permitted avocations (of infinitely leſs importance than your correſpondence) to interfere with my gratitude, my intereſt, and my inclination. What apology I have to make, though no way adequate to my negligence, is in ſhort as follows. After the receipt of your letter, I deferred writing till I could ſpeak of the arrival of your picture.—This did not happen till about a month or five weeks ago, when I was embarraſſed with maſons, carvers, carpenters, and company,

pany, all at a time. And though it were idle enough to ſay, that I could not find *one* vacant hour for my purpoſe, yet in truth my head was ſo confuſed by theſe multifarious diſtractions, that I could have written nothing ſatisfactory either to *myſelf* or *you*: nothing worth a ſingle *penny*, ſuppoſing the poſtage were to coſt you no more. The workmen had not *finiſhed my rooms* a minute, when Lady Luxborough, Mrs. Davies, and Mr. Outing arrived, with *five* ſervants and a *ſet* of horſes, to ſtay with me for ſome time. After a nine days viſit, I returned with them to Barrels, where I continued for a week; and whither (by the way) I go again with Lord Dudley in about a fortnight's time. Other company filled up the interſtices of my ſummer; and I hope my dear friend will accept of this apology for ſo long a chaſm of ſilence, during which I have been uniformly at his ſervice, and true to that inviolable friendſhip I ſhall ever bear him.

I PROCEED now to thank you for the *diſtinction* you ſhew me, in ſending me your picture; I do it very ſincerely. It is aſſuredly a ſtrong likeneſs, as my Lady Luxborough with all her ſervants that have *ſeen you* pronounce, as well as I; conſequently more valuable to a *friend* than a face he does not know, though it were one of Raphael's. The ſmile about the mouth is bad; as it agrees but ill with the gravity of the eyes, and as a ſmile ever ſo little

outré has a bad effect in a picture where it is *conſtant*, though it may be ever ſo graceful in a perſon where it is *tranſitory*. However, this may be altered, when I can meet with a good painter. I have no *other* objection, but to the prominence of the belly. The hair, I think, is good; and the coat and band no way exceptionable. I have given it all the advantage I can: it has a good light, and makes part of an elegant chimney-piece in a genteel, though little breakfaſt-room, at the end of my houſe.

MR. Whiſtler and I are now upon good terms, and two or three friendly letters have been interchanged betwixt us. He preſſes me to come to Whitchurch, and I *him* to come over to The Leaſowes; but the winter cometh, when no man can viſit.—The diſpute is adjuſted by *time*, whilſt we are arguing it by *expoſtulation*.—No uncommon event in moſt ſublunary projects!

LADY Luxborough ſaid very extraordinary things in praiſe of Mrs. G—, after you left us at Barrels; yet I ſincerely believe no more than ſhe deſerves. I took the liberty of ſhewing her your letter here, as it included a compliment to her which I thought particularly genteel:—She will always conſider you as a perſon of genius, and her friend.

DURING

DURING moſt of this ſummer (wherein I have ſeen much company either here or at Lord Dudley's), I have been almoſt conſtantly engaged in one continued ſcene of *jollity*. I endeavoured to find *relief* from ſuch ſort of diſſipation; and, when I had once given in to it, I was obliged to proceed; as, they ſay, is the caſe when perſons diſguiſe their faces with paint. *Mine* was a ſort of *painting* applied to my temper—"Spem vultu ſimulare, premere atrum "corde dolorem." And the moment I left it off, my ſoul appeared again all haggard and forlorn. My company has now deſerted me; the ſpleen-fogs begin to riſe; and the *terrible* incidents of laſt winter revive apace in my memory. This is my ſtate of mind, while I write you theſe few lines; yet, I thank God, my health is not much amiſs.

I DID not forget my promiſe of a box, &c. to Mrs. G—. I had a dozen ſent me, one or two of which I could have liked, had they been better *finiſhed*. They were of a good oval, white enamel, with flowers, &c. but horribly gilt, and not accurately painted. I beg my beſt ſervice to her, and will make a freſh eſſay. My deareſt friend, accept this awkward letter for the preſent.—In a few poſts, I will write again.—Believe me yours from the bottom of my ſoul.

W. SHENSTONE.

I will

I WILL ſend you a label for made-wine, after my own plan. It is enamel, with grapes, ſhepherd's pipe, &c. The motto "VIN DE PAISAN."

LXX. To Mr. JAGO.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Jago, Nov. 15, 1752.

COULD I with convenience mount my horſe, and ride to Harbury this inſtant, I ſhould much more willingly do ſo than begin this letter. Such terrible events have happened to us, ſince we ſaw each other laſt, that, however irkſome it may be to dwell upon them, it is in the ſame degree unnatural to ſubſtitute any ſubject in their place.

I DO ſincerely forgive your long ſilence, my good friend, indeed I do; though it gave me uneaſineſs. I hope you do the ſame by mine. I own, I could not readily account for the *former* period of yours, any otherwiſe than by ſuppoſing that I had ſaid or done ſomething, in the levity of my heart, which had given you diſguſt; but being conſcious to myſelf of the moſt ſincere regard for you, and believing it could never be diſcredited for any *trivial* inadvertencies, I remember, I continued ſtill in expectation of a letter, and did not dream of writing till ſuch time as I had

received one. I truſted you would write at *laſt*; and that, by all my paſt endeavours to demonſtrate my *friendſhip*, you would believe the *tree* was rooted in my heart, whatever irregularity you might obſerve in the *branches*.

THIS was my ſituation before that dreadful æra which gave me ſuch a ſhock as to baniſh my beſt friends for a time out of my memory. And when they recurred, as they did the firſt of any thing, I was made acquainted with that deplorable misfortune of yours! Believe me, I ſympathized in *your* affliction, nothwithſtanding my own; but alas! what comfort could I adminiſter, who had need of every poſſible aſſiſtance to ſupport myſelf? I wrote indeed a few letters with *difficulty*; amongſt the reſt, one to my friend Graves; but it was to vent my complaint.—I will ſend you the letter, if you pleaſe, as it is by far my leaſt painful method of conveying you ſome account of my ſituation. Let it convince you, that I could have written nothing at that time, which could have been of any ſervice to you: let it afford you, at leaſt, a faint ſketch of my deareſt brother's character; but let it not appear an oſtentatious diſplay of ſorrow, of which I am by no means guilty. I know but too well that I diſcovered upon the occaſion, what ſome would call, an unmanly tenderneſs; but I know alſo, that ſorrow upon ſuch ſubjects as theſe is very conſiſtent with virtue, and with the moſt abſolute reſignation to the juſt

decrees

decrees of Providence—"Hominis eſt enim [illegible] lore, *ſentire*; reſiſtere tamen & ſolatia admittere, "non ſolatiis non egere." Pliny.—I drank, purſued amuſements, never ſuffered myſelf to be a minute without company, no matter what, ſo it was but continual. At length, by an attention to ſuch converſation and ſuch amuſements as I could at other times deſpiſe, I forgot ſo far as to be chearful.—And after this, the ſummer, through an almoſt conſtant ſucceſſion of lively and agreeable viſitants, proved even a ſcene of jollity.—It was inebriation all, though of a mingled nature; yet has it maintained a ſort of truce with grief, till time can aſſiſt me more effectually by throwing back the event to a diſtance.—Now, indeed, that my company has all forſaken me, and I am delivered up to winter, ſilence, and reflection, the incidents of the laſt year revive apace in my memory; and I am even aſtoniſhed to think of the gaiety of my ſummer. The fatal anniverſary, the "dies quem ſemper acerbum, &c." is beginning to approach, and every face of the ſky ſuggeſts the ideas of laſt winter.—Yet I find myſelf chearful in *company*; nor would I recommend it to you to be much alone.—You would lay the higheſt obligation upon me by coming over at this time.—I preſſed your brother, whom I ſaw at Birmingham, to uſe his influence with you; but if you can by no means undertake the journey, I will take my ſpeedieſt opportunity of ſeeing you at Harbury.—Mr. Miller invited me ſtrenuouſly

to

to meet Dr. Lyttelton at his houſe; but I believe my moſt convenient ſeaſon will be, when my Lord Dudley goes to Barrels; for I can but ill bear the penſiveneſs of a long and lonely expedition. After all, if you *could* come hither firſt, it would afford me the moſt entire ſatisfaction.—I have been making alterations in my houſe that would amuſe you; and have many matters to diſcourſe with you, which it would be endleſs to mention upon paper.—Adieu! my dear friend! may your merit be known to ſome one who has greater *power* to ſerve you than myſelf; but be aſſured, at the ſame time, that no one loves you better, or eſteems you more.

W. SHENSTONE.

LXXI. To the ſame.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Jago, Jan. 29, 1751.

ALTHOUGH I have many reaſons to urge why I did not write to you before, or viſit you from Barrels as I fully intended, I will venture to wave all particulars till I ſee you; and only aſſure you in the general, that I was never able to write any thing ſatisfactory, or to viſit you, at that time, with any ſort of convenience.

BELIEVE

BELIEVE me, my good friend, if *inclination* might have ruled, I had been with you at Harbury many weeks ago. Sure I am, they muſt be the *cares* of home, and not the *pleaſures* of it, that *ever were* ſufficient to detain me during the *winter ſeaſon*. Nor do I think I have an enemy that wiſhes me more miſerable than I have almoſt conſtantly found myſelf ever ſince the beginning of *it*.

I CANNOT even now fix a time when I can ſee you; and perhaps it may be deferred till Mr. Miller's place will have received ſome advantage from the Spring; and in that caſe I would infallibly ſee my Lord Guilford's; but I leave this undetermined: and I hope, if you *can* wander from home with any kind of ſatisfaction, you will do me the juſtice to believe, that you have no friend alive who will more gladly receive you than myſelf.

I HAVE papered ſome rooms this laſt year, and would willingly have you ſee them before their colours are vaniſhed; which, I think, will unavoidably be the caſe of *one*, before a ſecond ſummer be half concluded.

THUS is beauty as uncertain as either fortune or fame.

I SUPPOSE you have heard there is a citation from Doctors Commons, and a writ of "Ne exeat" out againſt

againſt Mr. W— for an intrigue with ———. If you have not, be not *precipitate* in ſpreading the ſtory.—They ſay, he has fled into France on the occaſion.—What a ſhocking affair is this! ſo early in life! ſo extenſive, ſo laſting, ſo irremediable in its conſequences! but,

" Sic viſum Veneri! cui placet *impares*
" *Formas* atque *animos*, ſub juga ahenea,
" *Sævo* mittere cum joco!"

Your misfortunes and mine incline *us*, almoſt, to love *all* people that are miſerable; but how will the daughters of the Philiſtines rejoice on the occaſion; nay, almoſt countenance another's loſs of virtue, by manifeſting their own apparent want of humanity!

THERE is a moſt admirable piece of allegory on this head in the Female Fables, by Brooks, if I miſtake not; to whom the author in his preface acknowledges himſelf greatly indebted.

I AM truly ſorry to underſtand how much you are alone; I really imagined you were much happier in point of company than myſelf, as you live in a much politer neighbourhood; amongſt perſons of genius, learning, and humanity. And happier you *are*; for however I make a ſhift to ſcrape ſome com-

pany around me, they are ſuch as can affect me with little elſe beſides the ſpleen.

Do not dwell too much on ſubjects that make you thoughtful; ſuperficial amuſements are our point, till ſome time hence: I am an ill adviſer; but I preſcribe you the methods which I have found moſt effectual with myſelf.

I HAVE not been forgetful of the taſk that you enjoined me, to give you my obſervations on the verſes which you incloſed.—I will write my ſentiments on a ſeparate paper. Do not puniſh me with ſilence and ſuſpence concerning you; but write. I can ardently deſire what I but little deſerve, being

Your moſt affectionate friend,

W. S.

LXXII. To the ſame.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Jago, Feb. 27, 1753.

I WROTE you ſome account of myſelf, and incloſed ſome trivial criticiſms, in a letter I ſent you about a fortnight ago, which I hope you have received.—Tom comes now to enquire after your health,

health, and to bring back my "Ode to Colonel Fitzpatrick;" in regard to which, I desire that you will not be sparing of your animadversions. I whispered my difficulties to Mr. Miller at Hagley, how delicate I found the subject, and how hard it was to satisfy either myself or others; in all which points he agreed with me. Nevertheless, having twice broken my *promise* of sending a corrected copy to Sir George, I was obliged to make my peace by a *fresh* one, which, I suppose, I must of necessity perform.—Give me your whole sentiments hereupon, I beseech you; in particular and in general, as a critic and as a friend.—The bad state of spirits which I complained of in my last, for a long time together made me utterly irresolute: every thing occasioned me suspence; and I did nothing with appetite.—This was owing in a great measure to a slow nervous fever, as I have since discovered by many concurrent symptoms. It is now, I think, wearing off by degrees. I seem to anticipate a little of that "vernal delight" which Milton mentions, and thinks

"Able to chase
"All sadness, but despair."

At least, I begin to resume my silly clue of hopes and expectations; which I know, however, *will* not guide me to any thing more satisfactory than before.

I HAVE read ſcarce any new books this ſeaſon. Voltaire's new Tragedy was ſent me from London; but what has given me the moſt amuſement, *has* been the "Lettres de Madame de Maintenon." You have probably read them already in Engliſh, and then I need not recommend them. The "Life of "Lord Bolingbroke" is entirely his *public* life, and the book three parts filled with political remarks.

As to *writing*, I have not attempted it this year and more; nor do I know when I ſhall again.—However, I would be glad to correct that "Ode to the "Dutcheſs of Somerſet," when once I can find in whoſe hands it is depoſited. I was *ſhewn* a very elegant letter of hers, the other day; wherein ſhe aſks for it with great politeneſs: and as it includes nothing but a love of rural life, and ſuch ſort of amuſements as ſhe herſelf approves, I ſhall ſtand a good chance of having it received with partiality. She lives the life of a *religieuſe*. She has *written* my Lady Luxborough a very ſerious letter of condolence upon the misfortune in her family; and need enough has Lady Luxborough of ſo unchangeable a friend! for ſure nothing could have happened to a perſon in her ſituation more *ſpecifically* unfortunate.—Mr. Reynolds has been at Barrels, I hear, and has brought her a machine that goes into a coat-pocket, yet anſwers the end of "a jack for boots, a reading-deſk, "a cribbage-board, a pair of ſnuffers, a ruler, an

"eighteen-

" eighteen-inch-rule, three pair of nut-cracks, a " lemon-ſqueezer, two candleſticks, a picquet-board, " and the Lord knows what beſide."—Can you form an idea of it? if you can, do you not think it muſt give me pain to reflect, that I myſelf am uſeful for *no* ſort of purpoſe, when a paltry bit of wood can anſwer ſo *many?* but, indeed, whilſt it *pretends* to theſe exploits, it performs nothing *well*; and therein I agree with it. So true it is, with regard to me, what I told you long ago,

" Multa & præclara minantem
" Vivere nec recte, nec ſuaviter!"

We have a turnpike-bill upon the point of being brought into the Houſe of Commons: it will convey you about half the way betwixt Birmingham and Hales, and from thence to Hagley; but, I truſt, there will be a *left-hand* attraction, which will always make you deviate from the ſtrait line.

I should be aſhamed to reflect how much I have dwelt upon *myſelf* in this letter, but that I ſeriouſly approve of egotiſm in letters; and were I *not* to do ſo, I ſhould not have any other ſubject. I have not a ſingle neighbour, that is either fraught with politeneſs, literature, or intelligence; much leſs have I a tide of ſpirits to ſet my invention afloat: but the leſs I am able to amuſe *you*, the more deſirous am I of your letters; which afford me the trueſt en-

tertainment, even when my ſpirits are ever ſo much depreſſed.

THAT univerſal chearfulneſs which is the lot of ſome people, perſons that you and I may *envy* at the ſame time that we *deſpiſe*, is worth all that either fortune or nature can beſtow.

I am, with entire affection,

Yours,

W. SHENSTONE.

LXXIII. To Mr. GRAVES.

The Leaſowes,

Dear Mr. Graves, Mar. 28, 1753.

I AM vexed to find you have no copy of thoſe verſes—I muſt make a freſh enquiry; and ſhould they happen to accompany this letter, as I fear they will *not*, be ſo good as to aſſiſt me all you can in the way of *hints* and *corrections*—corrections of what *is*, and hints of what *may be*. I do not reckon much upon theſe verſes, or the patronage which you mention; though the Dutcheſs is a woman of high reputation, and has as much benevolence as any woman upon earth.

I DO *not* include the deſign of viſiting Bath as a public place: I have long ſince given up ſuch ſchemes of gaiety and expence. I viſit *you* and *Mrs. Graves*; at the leaſt, I mean to do ſo.

INOCULATION is a point on which I never ſpeak a ſyllable in the way of *pro* or *con*: I mean, not ſo as to influence particulars; for, in the general, I eſteem it both right and ſalutary; and even *right* becauſe we *find* it *ſalutary*.

I DO not know whether I could not bear the *diſhonour* of friends or relations better than their *death*. —It muſt afford one no ſmall ſatisfaction to give them one's affection and aſſiſtance under every frailty to which human nature is *expoſed*; at leaſt, ſo long as they are true to friendſhip. It is Mr. Whittler's opinion, as well as mine. But Mr. ———'s caſe is altogether different; and I make no queſtion that he thinks as you do upon the occaſion.

POOR Danvers's death affects me more than you would perhaps imagine. If you remember, I was at M—— when the ſcheme of his going abroad was in agitation. I think how this event muſt affect Mrs. T—, whoſe concern will not be *leſſened* by her long ſeparation from him. I dare ſay he reckoned upon his relations here as his *beſt eſtate*, whatever he might gain elſewhere; and, no doubt, the

hope of retiring amongſt them has been a conſtant ſpur to his diligence.—The event was always uncertain, and has proved at laſt unfortunate; yet, as Melmoth ſays very juſtly, "The courſe of human "affairs requires that we ſhould act with vigour upon "very precarious contingencies."—I deſire you would give me a ſight of the Latin inſcription.

I THINK it was the Gentleman's Magazine in which I was ſhewn your verſes.

I HAVE a particular and lively idea of your place; though I do not remember to have ſeen even ſuch *parts* of a ſcene as I have united together in my imagination. I cannot think otherwiſe than that the front-door opens here, the garden-door there, the ſtream runs in this place, &c. &c.

"Hac ibat Simois, hæc eſt Sigeia tellus."

THE ſight of the place could not impreſs my imagination more deeply; though the impreſſion I *am to* acquire will hardly leave one line of my preſent one remaining. *Cabbage-garden ornée* is very high burleſque, and affects the improvements of your friend too nearly.

LET me know in what manner Mrs. Graves and you are drawn. Be as particular as you pleaſe.

I COULD

I COULD not be clear from your letter whether you had received the box or not. That, together with the tallies, lay on the table before me while I wrote to you laſt; and went with my letter to Birmingham.—Pray ſatisfy me directly whether you received them.—They are trifles indeed; but, as they acquit me of my promiſe, they are virtually of conſequence.

MR. Whiſtler has not anſwered a letter which I ſent him above two months ago: nay, I think, a quarter of a year.

YOU are rich.—I have only to wiſh the continuance of your riches, with ſome diminution of your fatigue. And yet the moſt laborious man in the world is, I am fully aſſured, more happy than the *laziеſt*.

"THE Rival Brothers" has ſome of Dr. Young's affectations; and I queſtion if the moral be abſolutely true—at leaſt, Mr. Addiſon is in ſome meaſure againſt it: but, on the whole, I think it a noble Tragedy; abounding as much with refined ſentiments and elevated expreſſions, as "The Gameſter" and "The Earl of Eſſex" are deficient in *both*.

MY verſes are not yet ſent to Sir George Lyttelton; *I* ſtart new difficulties, and cannot make them to

my mind: yet have promiſed him a copy, and diſappointed him thrice; and can hardly defer it much longer without great offence.

I HAVE ſcarce been twenty yards from home this winter. Laſt night I viſited one of my neighbours; and what with wine, ſitting up late, a perfect flux of diſcourſe, and a return home through the dark, found myſelf *vertiginous* before I was aware. Never did Prior's manly deſcription, "I drank, I liked it "not, &c." ſeem ſo natural to me as it does to-day. I am abſolutely vile in my own ſight, and I abhor myſelf in duſt and aſhes. I was *never* ſo intoxicated as not to know what I ſaid, or to talk *mere* nonſenſe; and yet how many things could I wiſh unſaid that I let fall laſt night!

WE are going to add two new bells to our preſent ſet of ſix; to have a turnpike road from Hagley to Birmingham, through Hales; and to emerge a little from our obſcurity. I am, dear Sir, with compliments to Mrs. Graves,

Ever moſt affectionately yours,

W. SHENSTONE.

LXXIV. To the ſame, with Obſervations on Arms, Inſcriptions, &c.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, July 15, 1753.

I SEND you my Ode, as I ſent it to the Dutcheſs ſome weeks ago. Why I pitched upon one reading ſooner than another, I will not now explain: nor will I trouble you to make any freſh remarks upon it at preſent; only, when you happen to read it over at your leiſure, if any thing occurs to you that would tend to perfect it, I would beg you occaſionally to make ſome memorandums. I have not yet received an anſwer; but, as I accompanied the verſes with a letter, I ſuppoſe I ſhall receive one in return. I alſo added, to fill a blank ſpace in my paper-book, a poem which I call "The Viſta;" and which you may perhaps recollect: how properly I know not, for I had the benefit of no perſon's *judgement* or advice.

Lord Dudley made Mr. Dolman a preſent of a piece of plate, a large cup, in conſideration of his ſiſter's being at Broom about half a year. There was on it, one ſupporter awkwardly enough holding up the coronet in his paw, and from the coronet proceeded a label, with "Amoris ergo Dud-"ley." I do not know who was the manager, or whence he had the inſcription; but I think from

Dr. H—. This is *elegant* and *enough*. Nevertheleſs, as there may be ſome convenience in dazzling the eyes of the people where I dwell, and as *ſuch* eyes as theirs are not to be dazzled, and hardly *ſtruck*, by *elegance* alone, I choſe the method that was moſt *magnificent*.—I wiſh they are not invidious enough to ſay, that *his* arms are engraved there for want of ſome of my *own*: ſo I would not be long before I remove their notable ſuggeſtion.—I have truly ſo low an opinion of arms ſince they became purchaſeable by money, and ſince the preſent unlimited uſe of them, that, were I to find a coat to my name in the office which I did not like, I would not uſe it; but ſubſtitute what was more agreeable: yet ſome *ſort* of *right* or *claim* is requiſite to ſatisfy one's delicacy with an opinion of *property*; and indeed to fix one's *choice*, where one has the whole furniture of the univerſe for *its* object.—After all, the vulgar are more ſtruck with arms than any thing; "ſtupet "in titulis & imaginibus;" and, I believe, there were near two hundred people gathered round Lady Luxborough's landeau at Birmingham, and declaring her arms to be very *noble*, or otherwiſe.—I do not, therefore, chuſe to employ a vulgar *mind* about this matter.—Were you to go to London, I ſhould gladly ſolicit *you*; or if you have any friend you could write to in town, to ſearch the office; for really I have none that I like *for the purpoſe*. It will not coſt above a couple of ſhillings.—I will ſend you a draught

of

of the lid of my ſtandiſh when it arrives—for I really do not know what Mr. Hylton will put upon it: I find, he conſults with Dr. B—, my Lord's phyſician.— "*De* Dudley" would run moſt abominably, and "Baro Dudley" may be authorized by the frequent practice of Maittaire.—If it is inſcribed "Dudley" *alone*, I can add the reſt if I ſhould hereafter think proper; and I wiſh it may be ſo.

My verſes to the Colonel are not yet tranſcribed.

I THINK the Latin inſcription to your brother very elegant; and I ſhould not care to have any part of it omitted—I would, by all means, have this little hiſtory of his life perpetuated—"His "ſaltem, &c." And were you to put it into Engliſh, it would be too long for an inſcription; unleſs you were, by means of a printed elegy with notes, or any other ſuch method, to produce the ſame effect; and then you might make the epitaph as ſhort as you pleaſed.—After all, the *firſt* method is perhaps as eligible. When the affair is nearer a concluſion, I ſhould be glad to be of any ſervice. —I will think, and write again about it.

AND now, having ſpoke to ſuch matters as have been the ſubject of our late correſpondence, I am at liberty to diverſify my letter as I may.—I ſhould be glad to know in your next, whether you have

heard of late from Mr. Whiſtler; and whether he is confined at home as uſual by his mother's ſtate of health. I almoſt deſpair of ever ſeeing him again at The Leaſowes, though there is hardly any pleaſure I ſo much covet as that of ſurprizing him with the *alterations* I have *made*, and the *articles* I have *purchaſed*, during the five years ſince he was in Shropſhire: add to this, the ſeveral *acquaintances* I have formed which he would like, and the amuſing viſits I could pay hereabouts with freedom.—I do not know whether you ſaw Mr. Davenport and his family at Bath this ſpring. He is laying out his environs; and I am by appointment to go over the week after next. He has alſo a painter at this time taking views round his houſe, which is one of the moſt magnificent in our county; yet I never leave home but with reluctance. I really *love* no PLACE ſo well; and it is a great favour in me to allot any one a week of my *ſummer*.—Add to this, that my conſtitution requires nurſing; and I am moſt *happy* where I am moſt *free*. It is in vain to ſay, they *allow* you all freedom, where you cannot allow it *yourſelf*. For this reaſon, I never more enjoy myſelf, than I do at The Grange; and yet this to ſome may appear paradoxical.

I YESTERDAY embelliſhed my chalybeate ſpring.—The inſcription that is *cut* on the ſtone is as follows, viz.

" TONS

" FONS FERRVGINEVS.
" DIVAE QVAE SECESSV ISTO
" FRVI CONCEDIT
" SALVTI S."

Yet I queſtion whether ſome of the following be not preferable; if they are, I beg you will tell me. One ſhilling and ſix-pence produces the alteration:

" FONS FERRVGINEVS.
" DIVAE PER QVAM LICET
" HOC SECESSV FRVI, &c.
" SAL. &c."

or,

" DIVAE PER QVAM LATEBRAE
" QVAEVIS OBLECTANT
" &c."

or,

" DIVAE LOCORVM OMNIVM
" COMMENDATRICI, &c."

or,

" DIVAE NIMIRVM RVSTICAE
" SALVTI SACER."

or,

" DIVAE CVI DEBETVR
" LOCORVM OMNIVM AMOENITAS
" &c."

or,

" DIVAE PER QVAM LICET
" INORNATO RVRE LAETARI."

BELIEVE

BELIEVE me ever, with my beſt compliments to Mrs. Graves,

Your moſt obliged

and moſt affectionate ſervant,

W. SHENSTONE.

LXXV. To Mr. JAGO.

The Leaſowes,

Dear Mr. Jago, Jan. 29, 1754.

I AM at a loſs how to begin this letter.—I will not, however, after the uſual way, give you a tedious liſt of *apologies* in the front of it. Some account of my long ſilence you will find diſperſed throughout the letter; and as for what is deficient, I will depend upon your friendſhip.

THERE has not been a perſon here, ſince you left me, of whom I could obtain the leaſt intelligence concerning you. And as an enquiry by the poſt was my only obvious method, I do acknowledge myſelf to blame, notwithſtanding all the excuſes that I can make.

AMIDST that conflux of viſitants whom I received this laſt ſeaſon, I was hardly once *ſo* happy as I was

was in *your* company: I was the happier in ſeeing *you* ſo; and, if you remember, I took notice at the time, how little your vivacity was impaired in comparison of my own. If I was *then* but a dull *companion*, gueſs whether ſolitude and winter were likely to make me a better *correſpondent*. That vein of gaiety and humour, which you were once ſo partial as to diſcover in my letters, will ſcarce appear there any more: not even to the eyes of the moſt partial friend I have. Should you deny what I aſſert, and impute it to a fit of ſpleen, yet you may *allow* that it will ſcarce enliven any letter that I write in *winter*. Friendſhip ſtill remains! Friendſhip, like the root of ſome perennial flower, even *then* perhaps gathers ſtrength in ſecret, that it may afford a better diſplay of its colours in the ſpring.

I DO not pretend this to be an adequate apology. I know, my deareſt friend, that you both *like* to ſee and hear from me: it proves, however, that you have no great *loſs* either of my letters or my company.

I AM, as the phraſe is, deeply penetrated by the civilities of your Mr. Miller. He took a ſhort dinner with me once this ſeaſon, dropping Sir George at Mr. P—'s. He could not have pleaſed me better. Here he happened to meet Mr. Lyttelton and Captain Whood. He afterwards breakfaſted here, and

and in general ſeemed glad of every occaſion to bring me the genteeleſt company. To him I owe Miſs Banks and Lord Temple. Can you think that Radway now, as well as Harbury, has no attractions for me? You know me too well; but I have not truly ſuch a ſtate of health as to dare to be from home. Friends will ſay, "you may be as free at "our houſes as your own, &c." and they will *mean* as they *ſay*; but if you cannot make *yourſelf* ſo, what is all this to the purpoſe?

I CANNOT give you a detail of what has paſſed with me ſince I ſaw you. Lord Dudley, with myſelf, made one viſit to Lord Plymouth's. We met Mr. and Mrs. Winnington.—We took a trip to Mr. Vernon's, where we found Mr. Coventry and other company. The impreſſions I received from them would afford ſubject for *converſation* betwixt you and me; but I muſt not aſſign too much of my paper to that purpoſe.

LORD Plymouth's piece of water ſhould have been a ſerpentine river. I could give you ſtrong reaſons. —I think my Lord ſuch a character as will make a reputable figure in life—*beloved* he *is*, and *muſt* be at firſt ſight.—Lady Plymouth is the moſt amiable of women; and, of all the world, the propereſt perſon that my Lord could have choſen. The plan for their houſe I think right; ſuppoſing it right to continue

tinue it where it is. The park is capable of fome conſiderable beauties. Lord Plymouth has been once here ſince, and talks of cauſing me to come, and deſign for his environs.—I ſo to be highly in his favour.—I hope ſome time to meet you there.

My Ode, after an aſtoniſhing delay, was preſented to the Dutcheſs of Somerſet. It produced me two genteel letters from her Grace. I am well ſatisfied with the event, for ſome reaſons which I will one day give you—none of moment.—Soon after this, Dodſley preſſed me to contribute, as amply as I pleaſed, to a fourth volume of his Miſcellanies. I at firſt meant to do ſo pretty largely; I then changed my mind, and ſent only ſome little pieces. Part of theſe were my own; part Mr. Whiſtler's, Mr. Graves's, and ſome accidental pieces of others, which I found in my bureau.—I purpoſed to ſend ſomething of yours too; of *myſelf*, if I was *hurried*; elſe, not without your conſent. What I thought of was your Linnets. Laſt week he writes me word, that the town will now be too much engroſſed by the buſineſs of elections; and that he does not proceed this winter.—So that we ſhall now, you ſee, have time to meet, or write upon the ſubject.

Mr. Graves ſent me the incloſed little fable, for Dodſley, if I approved it.—I made ſome alterations, and ſent it.—Return it to me, if you pleaſe.—It

is pretty; but the inſcription muſt be "To a "Friend."

Some correſpondence I have had this winter with Mr. Hylton, about toys and trinkets which he gets done for me in London. He is by far a better *friend* and *correſpondent* than a *poet*. Should you take a trip to town, he would be quite *proud* to ſee you.

I am now, like the reſt of the world, peruſing Sir Charles Grandiſon—I know not whether that world *joins* me, in preferring Clariſſa. The author wants the art of *abridgement* in every thing that he has written, yet I am much his admirer.

My dear friend! cheriſh and preſerve your own vivacity, and let not this phlegmatic epiſtle impair it. If occaſion offers, call on me for my *own* ſake; and believe you have not alive a more affectionate friend.

W. Shenstone.

LXXVI. To Mr. GRAVES, on the Alternations of Pleaſure and Pain.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, April 19, 1754.

IT is a long, long time, according to the computation of friendſhip, ſince I had the pleaſure of a line from you; and I write chiefly to remind you of it, not with any hopes of affording you the amuſement of a ſingle minute. In truth, I have not ſpirits for it. The ſeverity, the duration, the ſolitude, of this winter have well-nigh exhauſted them.—The ſucceſſion, the regular ſucceſſion, of pain and pleaſure becomes every day more clear to me. It begins to ſeem as ordinary as the courſe of day and night. Thus my laſt ſummer was the moſt amuſing I ever ſaw; my winter the moſt diſagreeable—allow me to except one only: I mean, that ever-mournful winter which robbed me of my deareſt relation. Sometimes this pain and pleaſure are contraſted within the compaſs of a day; ſometimes in different weeks, &c. &c. However, do not think me ſuperſtitious; there is hardly a perſon that is *leſs* ſo. Yet I am firmly perſuaded of the alternation, either in the mind, or in the events themſelves. My ſummer, I ſaid before, was highly entertaining; my winter rendered equally diſagreeable, by a long-continued ſquabble amongſt our principal pariſhioners,

and by the death of my beſt-beloved and the moſt accompliſhed of my relations, M— D—. She riſqued going to London for the ſake of finding ſomething *new*; was ſeized with the ſmall-pox, and died in all her bloom.—The natural conſequence which we ſhould draw from obſervations of this ſort is, equanimity; "æquam memento rebus, &c." and again, "ſperat infeſtis, metuit ſecundis, &c." Enough of this, which I ſhould not mention but that the fact itſelf ſtrikes me continually more and more; and were I to mark the pleaſing and unpleaſing parts of my exiſtence in an almanac, as the Romans did their *Faſti* and *Neſaſti*, I know not if, at the year's end, the black and white marks would not nearly balance each other.

I have bought "Hogarth's Analyſis:" it is really entertaining; and has, in ſome meaſure, adjuſted my notions with regard to beauty in general. For inſtance, were I to draw a ſhield, I could give you reaſons from hence why the ſhape was pleaſing or diſagreeable. I would have you *borrow* and read it.

GRANDISON I cannot think equal to Clariſſa; though, were merit in this age to be preferred, the author of it deſerves a biſhopric.

JAGO

Jago has been fortunate for once; but the value of his livings muſt be exaggerated in the news-papers.

If Mr. Whiſtler would give me a viſit in the height of my ſeaſon this year, I ſhould look upon it as one of the moſt pleaſing events that could happen to the remainder of my life; and I would not preſume to hope that fate would ever allow me a repetition of it.

My love of toys is not quite exhauſted—I have purchaſed, or rather renovated, ſome that are both rich and beautiful, though ſhort of what I meant them. I have amuſed myſelf with deſigning little ornaments this winter, ſome of which may turn to account under the management of ſome Birmingham mechanic. —To atchieve *caſe*, in that ſeaſon, is the moſt that I can *hope*; and it is more than I often *obtain*.

Excuse this worthleſs letter; which *muſt* coſt you money, as they tell me franks are uſeleſs. I could not avoid ſome uneaſineſs upon reflecting how long you have been ſilent. Preſent my beſt compliments to Mrs. Graves; and pay a tribute of one ſingle half-ſheet to that affection with which I am ever

Yours,

W. Shenstone.

LXXVII. To the ſame, on the Death of Mr. WHISTLER.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, June 7, 1754.

THE melancholy account of our dear friend Whiſtler's death was conveyed to me, at the ſame inſtant, by yours and by his brother's letter. I have written to his brother this poſt; though I am very ill able to write upon the ſubject, and would willingly have waved it longer, but for decency. The triumvirate, which was the greateſt happineſs and the greateſt pride of my life, is broken! The fabric of an ingenuous and diſintereſted friendſhip has loſt a noble column! yet it may, and *will*, I truſt, endure till one of us be laid as low. In truth, one can ſo little ſatisfy one's ſelf with what we ſay upon ſuch ſad occaſions, that I made three or four eſſays before I could *endure* what I had written to his brother.—Be ſo good as excuſe me to him as well as you can, and eſtabliſh me in the good opinion of him and Mr. Walker.

POOR Mr. Whiſtler! how do all our little ſtrifes and bickerments appear to us at this time! yet we may with comfort reflect, that they were not of a *ſort* that touched the *vitals* of our friendſhip; and I may ſay, that we fondly loved and eſteemed each other,

other, of neceſſity—" Tales animas *oportuit* eſſe con-
" cordes." Poor Mr. Whiſtler! not a ſingle acquaint-
ance have I made, not a ſingle picture or curioſity
have I purchaſed, not a ſingle embelliſhment have I
given to my place, ſince he was laſt here, but I have
had his approbation and his amuſement in my eye.
I will aſſuredly inſcribe my larger urn to his memo-
ry; nor ſhall I paſs it without a pleaſing melancho-
ly during the remainder of my days. We have each
of us received a pleaſure from *his* converſation, which
no other converſation can afford us at our preſent
time of life.

ADIEU! my dear friend! may our remembrance
of the perſon we have loſt be the ſtrong and ever-
laſting cement of our affection! Aſſure Mr. John
Whiſtler of the regard I have for him, upon his *own*
account, as well as his brother's. Write to me;
directly if you have opportunity. Whether you have
or no, believe me to be ever moſt affectionately yours,

W. SHENSTONE.

I BEG my compliments to Mrs. Graves.

LXXVIII. To the ſame.

The Leaſowes.

Dear Mr. Graves, July 15, 1754.

THE *particulars* relating to our poor friend's departure occaſioned me much concern, and indeed ſome tears: yet as *thoſe* particulars are what one covets to hear, and the melancholy which they produce is never unmixed with pleaſure, I think myſelf much obliged to you for the care you took to convey them. It is poſſible, the letters I wrote to you and Mr. J. Whiſtler might appear too tender from a *mere* friend of the deceaſed; but there is a ſympathy betwixt friends, which is not always found amongſt relations; nor does *kindred* imply *friendſhip* a whit more than *friendſhip* does *kindred*. It is not many weeks ago, that I had a bill filed againſt me in Chancery by young D—, the only near relation I have by the mother's ſide, and the next in line of ſucceſſion to my ſhare of the Penn's eſtate.—Do not let this ſurprize you—I believe the affair will be accommodated.—He only wanted to procure a diviſion of the Harborough eſtate at a large expence, which might be better adjuſted without *any*; in other words, to run his head againſt a ſtone-wall, that he *might* have a chance of cauſing it to tumble upon *me*. Would you conſent that I ſhould ſuffer him to have the manſion-houſe at Harborough thrown into his lot? Were I ſo to do, I could make it ad-

vantageous to myself, and the dispute were at an end; but I have a kind of romantic veneration for that *place* and *family*; which, if you remember, I have expressed in one of my best elegies *.

PRAY what will become of our letters to Mr. Whistler? As I am not conscious of any thing dishonourable in mine (and I am *sure* I may say the same of yours), methinks I could wish that they might not be destroyed. It is from a few letters of my own or others alone, accidentally preserved, that I am able to recollect what I have been doing since I was born.

I MAY, when I was last at Barrels, a surgeon of Bath, whose name, I think, was Cleland. He knew your name and place; but, I find, was not personally acquainted with you.—I am glad enough to hear that your place gets into vogue. It is, I think, what you should *chuse*, upon all accounts. Let the beauty of the place guide them to the merits of its *owner*. I have often thought, myself, that were a person to live at The Leasowes, of more merit than myself, and a few degrees more worldly prudence, he could scarce want opportunities to procure his own advancement. My rural embellish[illegible] are perhaps more considerable than yours [illegible] then the vicinity of Bath might occasion you a greater conflux. Your unexpensive illuminations please me highly.

* Elegy xv.

I have

I have purpoſed theſe many years to purchaſe a ſet of tin-lamps, of about four-pence a-piece, to ſtick againſt trees, and to uſe upon occaſion in my coppice; or rather in my grove, where ſome of the water-falls would not fail to ſhew delightfully.

You aſked me about Jago's preferment. The living *laſt given* him by the Biſhop of Worceſter is, I believe, near an hundred pounds a year. With this, he has Hanbury, of about fifty; and Cheſterton, a ſort of chapel of eaſe, about forty; in the *whole*, therefore, about a hundred and ninety: but then he is obliged to keep a curate; and what I think yet worſe is, that he cannot make it *convenient* to *live* at his new ſituation, which is a pretty one.

I HAVE had ſome viſitants this ſeaſon; indeed as many, and as conſiderable, as ſuch a ſort of ſeaſon could afford me. A Scotch peer called upon me in his way through Birmingham: his title was D——. He ſeemed to have a very clear head, a very polite and eaſy manner, and all the refinement of true taſte, *without* the warmth or appetite.—I could not help thinking him, on many accounts, characteriſtic of the Scottiſh nation.

WOULD to God I could ſee you and Mrs. Graves here this ſummer! I have the ſame wiſh it may be

my

my lot to viſit *you* next autumn. Be aſſured, I *purpoſe* it.

I EXPECT Dodſley every week. He will, I am convinced, be for publiſhing his Miſcellany next winter. Would Mr. W—, think you, agree, that you and I ſhould be allowed to publiſh ſuch of poor Mr. Whiſtler's papers there, as we judged were moſt likely to do credit to his memory?

ADIEU! dear Mr. Graves. Let us reconcile our affections to the ordinary events of life; and let us adopt my friend Jago into our ſecond triumvirate. I am, however, always, with *peculiar* attachment, yours,

W. SHENSTONE.

MY beſt compliments to Mrs. Graves.

P. S. SINCE I wrote the foregoing, I have had Mr. Davenport of Davenport-houſe, with all his family.—His brother, the clergyman, remembered you by your picture.—His wife is the fineſt *perſon*, &c. I have ſeen here, except Lady Ayleſbury—ingenious, eaſy-behaved, and of an excellent temper. —They come to Bath in a fortnight.

SINCE that time, Sir George Lyttelton, Mr. Lyttelton, and Miſs Lyttelton.—Sir George thinks ſome alterations requiſite in my verſes, to which I cannot eaſily bring myſelf to conform—but muſt.

I look upon my ſcheme of embelliſhing my farm as the only lucky one I ever purſued in my life.—My place now brings the world home to me, when I have too much indolence to go forth in queſt of it.

LXXIX. To the ſame, on hearing that his Letters to Mr. WHISTLER were deſtroyed.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, Oct. 23, 1754.

IT is certainly ſome argument of a *peculiarity* in the eſteem I bear you, that I feel a readineſs to acquaint you with *more* of my foibles than I care to truſt with any other perſon. I believe nothing ſhews us more plainly either the different *degrees* or *kinds* of regard that we entertain for our ſeveral friends (I may alſo add the *difference* of their *characters*), than the ordinary ſtyle and tenor of the letters we addreſs to them.

I confeſs to you, that I am conſiderably mortified by Mr. John W—'s conduct in regard to my letters to his brother; and, rather than they ſhould have been ſo unneceſſarily deſtroyed, would have given more money than it is allowable for me to mention with *decency*. I look upon my letters as ſome of *my* chef-d'œuvres; and, could I be ſuppoſed to have the leaſt pretenſions to propriety of ſtyle or ſentiment,

ment, I should imagine it must appear, principally, in my letters to his brother, and one or two more friends. I considered them as the records of a *friendship* that will be always *dear* to me, and as the *history* of my *mind* for these twenty years last past. The amusement I should have found in the perusal of them would have been altogether innocent; and I would gladly have preserved them, if it were only to explain those which I shall preserve of his brother's. Why he should allow either *me* or *them* so very little weight as not to *consult* me with regard to them, I can by no means conceive. I suppose it is not *unexpressive* to return them to the surviving friend. I had no answer to the letter which I wrote Mr. J. W—. I received a ring from him; but as I thought it an inadequate memorial of the friendship which his brother had for me, I gave it to my servant the moment I received it; at the same time I have a neat handish, on which I caused the lines Mr. W— left with it to be inscribed, and which appears to me a much more agreeable remembrancer.

I have read your new production with pleasure; and as this letter begins with a confession of foibles, I will own, that through mere laziness I have sent you back your copy in which I have made some erasements, instead of giving you my reasons on which those erasements were founded. Truth is, it seems to me to want mighty few *written* from what is

now

now the preſent text; and that, upon one more peruſal, you will be able to give it as much perfection as you mean it to have. And yet, did I ſuppoſe you would inſert it in Dodſley's Collection, as I ſee no reaſon you have to the contrary, I would take any pains about it that you ſhould deſire me. I muſt beg another copy, at your leiſure.

I SHOULD like the inſcription you mention upon a real ſtone-urn, which you purchaſe very reaſonable at Bath: but you muſt not riſque it upon the vaſe you mention, on any account whatever.

Now I mention Bath, I muſt acquaint you, that I have received intelligence from the younger Dodſley, that his brother is now there, and that none of the papers I ſent him are yet *ſent to preſs*; that he expects his brother home about the fourth or fifth of November, when he proceeds with his publication. Poſſibly you may go to Bath whilſt he is there, and, if ſo, may chuſe to have an interview.

I SHALL ſend two or three little pieces of my own, in hopes that you will adjuſt the reading, and return them as ſoon as you conveniently can. All I can ſend to-night is this "Ode to Memory." I ſhall in the laſt place deſire your opinion as to the manner of *placing* what is ſent. The firſt pages of his Miſcellany muſt be already fixed. I think to propoſe

propoſe ours for the laſt; but as to the *order*, it will depend entirely upon you.

ADIEU! in other words, God bleſs you!—I have company at the table all the time I am writing. Your ever moſt affectionate

W. SHENSTONE.

LXXX. To Mr. JAGO.

The Leaſowes,
June 16, 1754.

Dear Mr. Jago,

WERE I to pronounce my ſentence upon the long ſuſpenſion of our correſpondence, I ſhould impute the blame of it, in almoſt *equal* meaſure, to *yourſelf* and to *me*. To *you*, for an omiſſion of the letter you *promiſed* me when laſt in town; to me, for waiting in expectation of it, and for neglecting to do *juſtice* to the ſentiments of my heart on the occaſion of your late preferment. Great were the hopes I had indeed conceived, that your increaſe of revenue had been accompanied with a place of reſidence which was more *to your mind* than that where you at preſent abide; but I do not find by any accounts that you purpoſe to leave Harbury: for which, no doubt, you have reaſons which I do not yet penetrate, but which may demand my aſſent the moment you diſcover them. I have but little to ſay of the life I have led ſince you received ſome account

count of me from Mr. Hylton in London. The Winter, or at leaſt its *miniſters*, continued to tyrannize during the *minority* of Spring; and the Spring has alike been ſlow in giving up the reins to Summer. Of conſequence, I ſeem in a ſort of middle ſtate, betwixt a dull half-animated grub and an inſignificant loco-motive fly. Neither in the *one* ſtate or *other* am I of the leaſt importance; but, from ſome advances which I have *already* made, you are *ſomewhat* the more likely to find me in your garden. About a fortnight ago I received a line or two from our intimate acquaintance and ſchool-fellow Mr. Hull. It was brought me by Sir Edward Boughton's gardener; a fellow of good taſte, to whom Mr. Hall deſired I would cauſe The Leaſowes to be ſhewn. I find you have delighted Mrs. Hall by ſome alterations which you propoſe for their environs, and which they thoroughly reſolve to put in execution. When I come over into Warwickſhire, as I hope to do ſoon, I ſhall be very glad to make them a viſit in your company. My ſpirits, though far from good, are better in the main than they were in winter, and on ſome peculiar days are raiſed as high as to *alacrity*; *very* ſeldom higher, ſeldom ſo high.

You muſt (from hence at leaſt) take matters in the order or rather *diſorder* in which they occur: Mr. Miller I ſaw on Wedneſday laſt in Lady Lyttelton's coach, who ſtopped two minutes at my gate

on

on her return from London. I enquired concerning you; but could gather no intelligence.—Mr. Hylton, who is now in Warwickshire (if he have not strolled to London), has been with me several months this summer. He is adding a room or two to his place, which lies very near me; and purposes to reside there as soon as it is finished. The situation is not void of beauties; but, if you will pardon the vanity, must veil its bonnet to mine. I have heard of planting hollies, pyracanthas, and other berry-bearing greens, to attract those Blackbirds which you have so effectually celebrated: it shall be *my* ambition to plant good neighbours; and, what with Lord Dudley and his exotics, Mr. Hylton with his fossils, and myself with my *ferme ornée*, is there not some room to expect that we may attract the tasters this way? but first we must take some care to *advertise* them where their treasures lie.—Another day is passed, and Mr. Miller, &c. has again been with me, and waked me out of a sound sleep to breakfast.—He mentions with what reluctance he *left* a surveyor at Radway, employed in taking plans of the field of battle near Edge-hill. This he purposes to enrich with a number of anecdotes, gleaned from his neighbourhood; which must probably render it extremely entertaining: and surely Edge-hill fight was never more unfortunate to the nation, than it was lucky for Mr. Miller! He prints, together with this plan, another sheet of Radway Castle. I approve his design. He will, by this

means, turn every bank and hillock of his eſtate there, if not into *claſſical*, at leaſt into *hiſtorical* ground.

I HAVE done mighty little about my grounds ſince laſt winter. As indolence has on *many* occaſions contributed to *impair* my finances, it is buſt juſt that it ſhould ſometimes contribute to *reſtore* them. Yet I am not quite deſtitute of ſomething new for your amuſement.

OF late I have neither *read* nor *written* a ſyllable. What pleaſed me laſt was "Hogarth's Analyſis." I expect Dodſley down every week; and as he will ſpend a few days with me, I could wiſh you were to meet him. His genius is truly poetical, and his ſentiments altogether liberal and ingenuous.

I AM, at preſent, a ſurveyor of roads; employed in repairing my lane to the turnpike. How glad ſhould I be to meet you, and to ſhew you its *beauties!* to ſhew you Mr. Hylton's new ſeries of coins;—his *deſigns* as well as his *performances* at Lappa!—how glad ſhould I be to ſee you! yea, I would hardly fail to return with you to Harbury; were you to add this one obligation. I left Mr. Miller in doubt whether he would not ſee me at Radway ſome time next week. Evil and capricious health (the particulars of which would make a detail of no importance) deſtroys all my punctuality, and bids me promiſe with *fear*. You, I truſt, are

moſtly

moſtly at home; and were you to be at Snitterfield, I would follow you without reluctance. So, with hopes to ſee you ſhortly either in Warwickſhire or Shropſhire, I relinquiſh the ſubject.

I HAVE reſerved a very melancholy ſubject for the laſt. May you, and Mr. Graves, and myſelf, ſtand firm to ſupport the fabric of friendſhip, which has loſt a very beautiful column in poor Mr. Whiſtler! he died of a ſore-throat, which in a few days time turned to an inward mortification.—I will ſay no more on the occaſion: very affecting has it been to me.—God preſerve your life, your happineſs, and your friendſhips! and may you ever be *aſſured* of *that* with which I am, dear Sir,

Your moſt affectionate humble ſervant,

W. SHENSTONE.

SHALL I beg a line from you, as ſoon as may be? —I do, moſt earneſtly.

I AM given to underſtand that I may expect a viſit this ſummer from the Biſhop of Worceſter; from Lord Ward, Lord Coventry, and Lord Guerdſey.—It may be ſo; but honours of *this ſort*, which would formerly have affected me, perhaps *too* deeply, have now loſt much of their wonted poignancy. Can *ſuch* perſons bear to ſee the ſcenes *riant*, and to find the *owner* gloomy? Let *them*, as they are *able*, make

my circumſtances more affluent; and they ſhall find the *reflection* in *my* face and in *their* reception; but, as this will never be, it is no compliment to declare, that an hour or two's interview with you or Mr. Graves outweighs the arrival of the whole Britiſh peerage.

SOMETHING elſe I have to ſay. Young Pixell laſt winter told me, that the organiſt of Worceſter had ſet your Ode (The Blackbirds) to muſic; that he *liked* the muſick; and that he would ſing it next evening at the Birmingham concert. I have not heard him mention it *ſince*, and I *forgot* to enquire; but, if you happen to have the notes, I ſhould be glad if you would incloſe them for me.

I HAVE been of late much bent upon the encreaſe of *horns* in this neighbourhood.—Do not interpret me *perverſely*; I mean French-horns only. My Lord Dudley has had a perſon to teach two of his ſervants—nothing—at my inſtigation; but your old acquaintance Maurice, *who lives at the corner of my coppice*, will exceed them in a week by means of a good ear. I have borrowed a horn for him. Adieu!

LXXXI. To

LXXXI. To C— W—, Esq.

Dear Mr. W—, July 6, 1754.

YOU do me justice in believing that I am truly sorry you have not been well. A degree or two of regularity more than what you have already will, I fancy, restore your health, and my satisfaction; and I beg you will afford me the earliest account of your recovery.

I CONSIDERED Master W—'s visit as an absolute engagement, and remained at home in constant expectation of him for a fortnight together.—I am, however, not sorry, for his own sake, that he is gone to Oxford, especially as you seem to have an assurance of its proving advantageous. Pray assure him of my earnest wishes for his happiness, and that The Leasowes will be always at his service, whenever, through the fickleness of human nature, he thinks proper to give up a Muse for a Water-nymph.

I EXPECT Mr. Hylton daily.—He was last week in London, and is now, I believe, at Coventry.—He will probably visit you before he comes into this country.—He talked of it when he left me.—I am obliged to be brief.

POST-WOMAN waits for me, "multa gemens." Dodsley is the man for your purpose—He has, with

good genius, a liberal turn of mind.—I expect him to ſpend a few days here every week.—I will, if he returns through Warwickſhire, occaſion him to call upon you; but you know he is often lame with the gout, and will hardly be able to make any long digreſſion.

YOUR caſe is exactly mine.—You ſay, you cannot bear wrongs with patience, but you can ſleep and *forget* them.—So can I—ſo do I.—Did I never tell you (if not, I do ſo now) that indolence will, in a thouſand inſtances, give one all the advantages of philoſophy? and pray, if you call me lazy any more, take care that you do not uſe an expreſſion by way of diſparagement, which I conſider as the higheſt honour. I am a fool, however, for diſcovering my ſecret. What a number of compliments might you have made me unwittingly!

"Tacitus paſci ſi poſſet corvus, haberet
"Plus dapis, & rixæ minus invidiæque."

HAD I time, I could comfort you under your ill-uſage, by diſcovering to you the ſimilitude of my own ſituation.

EXCUSE this ſcrawl; accept my compliments; carry them to Mrs. and Miſs W—; and believe me ever your obliged and moſt obedient humble ſervant,

W. SHENSTONE.

LXXXII. To

LXXXII. To Mr. JAGO, on their Contribution to DODSLEY's Miſcellanies.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Jago, Jan. 22, 1755.

I AM ſure you muſt be puzzled how to account for my ſilence, after the honour you have done me by your verſes, and the requeſt you made that I would *write*.—I am alſo as much at a loſs how to give a proper weight to my apology. To ſay I have been ill, would perhaps imply too much; when I would only allude to that ſtate of heavineſs and dejection which is ſo frequently my lot at this time of the year; and which renders me both *averſe* to writing, and utterly diſſatisfied with every thing that I *do* write.

IF at any time my head grew a little leſs confuſed than ordinary, I was obliged to devote my attention to the affair in which I had ſo *fooliſhly* involved myſelf with Dodſley. You are unable to conceive what vexation it has given me: I could not endure to *diſappoint* him: of conſequence, it has been my lot to ſtudy the delicacies of *poetry* when my brain was not ſufficient to indite a piece of common proſe; but as the *mouſe* (by which I mean my *own* performances) will ſo ſoon make its ridiculous appearance, it were totally impolitic in me to expatiate on the labours of the *mountain*.—The firſt letter I received from you

left me greatly diſſatisfied. I was then to ſend D— my *final* inſtructions in a poſt or two.—You took little notice of any query I made; and intimated a diſapprobation, which agreed *too well* with my own internal ſentiments.—I knew not but you were *angry* at the *liberties* I had taken; though I could have ſuppreſſed any ſingle paper which I had then conveyed to London.—Little did I *then* imagine that it was in my power to have protracted the affair till *now*. Had that been the caſe, I ſhould have troubled you with repeated embaſſies; for I abhor the tediouſneſs of the poſt, and my ſervants do little at this time of the year that is of more importance than their maſter's poetry.

YOUR next letter convinced me that you had taken no offence; and ſo far I was happy: but then I wanted to have your Goldfinches as correct as your Blackbirds; there were *ſome* things I wiſhed you to alter; and others in regard to which I was deſirous to ſpeak my *ſentiments*. Add to this, my own *verſes*, with which I was infinitely *more* diſſatisfied. Why then did I not write?—The true reaſon was, that I was preſſed by D— to ſend concluſions every poſt; and though I have had all this leiſure (as it *happens*) ſince you wrote, I never could *depend* upon more than the ſpace of a day or two. Beſides, criticiſms in the way of letter are extremely tedious and diſſatisfactory; inſomuch, that I am thoroughly

thoroughly determined never to print any thing for the future, unleſs I have the company of my friends when I ſend to the preſs. Hurried as I then was, I ſent up your two copies, and what I propoſed for him of my own, with a kind of *diſcretionary* power to ſelect the beſt readings. How you would approve of this meaſure I knew not; but I had this to plead in my behalf, that D— was a perſon of taſte *himſelf*; that he had, as I imagined, many learned friends to aſſiſt him; that his *intereſt* was concerned in the perfection of his Miſcellany; and that I ſubmitted my own pieces to the ſame judgement.

After all, I am but indifferently ſatisfied with the preſent ſtate of theſe contributions. D— writes juſt ſo much as he deems *neceſſary* in the way of buſineſs, and paſſes by a thouſand points in my letters which deſerve an anſwer. His laſt acquaints me, that he has ſpent a whole day in the arrangement of what I have ſent him; and that he purpoſes to ſend me *proof-ſheets* before the cloſe of this week, deſiring I would ſend them back by the return of the poſt. Whether they arrive on Saturday or on Monday, I can keep them till the Thurſday following.

And this brings me, in the laſt place, to the main purpoſe of this letter.—It is a requeſt on which I lay great ſtreſs; and which you muſt not refuſe me upon

upon almoſt any conſideration.—I beg, in ſhort, that you would promiſe me the favour of your company on Monday (or even Tueſday) next, if poſſible; and let us jointly fix the readings of *your* pieces, of my *own*, and thoſe of our common *friends*.—You will immediately comprehend the *expediency* of this; now, in particular, that our names are to appear. *Some* alterations I think *neceſſary* in your Goldfinches, and there are two or three ſtanzas which I think you might improve.—Nevertheleſs, I will not pretend that this journey is ſo *requiſite* upon your *own* account as *mine*; and will recommend it upon no other footing than the pleaſure you will receive by the obligation which you will confer.

I THOUGHT to have concluded here; but, as an envelope is now become altogether neceſſary, have a temptation to proceed which I did not ſee before.

IT is now become Friday the twenty-fourth of January. The packets I ſend, and the requeſt that I make upon ſo *little* warning, will, at firſt, aſtoniſh you.—Unforeſeen interruptions would not ſuffer me to diſpatch my courier ſooner.—What then remains, but that I endeavour to adjuſt this affair agreeably to its *preſent* circumſtances?

You will readily conceive, from what you obſerve in my packets, how deſireable your company is to

me at this juncture. Supposing it then in your *power* to come over on Monday, Tuesday, or even Wednesday, I am inclined to believe you *will*. Supposing it *not* so, I can foresee you will not have leisure to satisfy my queries by the return of the bearer: and what I would *next* propose is, that you would either suffer me to send again to you betwixt this time and Thursday next; or that you would yourself dispatch a purpose-messenger, and allow me to pay for his journey.—In either of these *latter* cases, I am sure you so well know the nature of my present irresolution, that you will endeavour to afford me all the assistance you are able.

Adieu! my dear friend! and depend upon my best services on every possible occasion.

I am ever your most affectionate

and most obedient servant,

W. Shenstone.

LXXXIII. To the same, on the same Subject.

The Leasowes,

Dear Mr. Jago, Feb. 22, 1755.

I RECEIVED a letter from Dodsley, dated the fifteenth of February; informing me that you were then in town, had been with him, and left your directions

directions whither he might ſend you a ſet of Miſcellanies.

FEBRUARY the twentieth, and not *before*, arrived young H—— with your letter; very obligingly intended to give me previous notice of your journey; but which, by the iniquity of chance, tended only to acquaint me with an opportunity which I had *loſt*.

THERE is nothing could have been ſo fortunate as your journey to London, had Mr. H— thought proper to bring your letter in due time.—What excuſe he made for his neglect, or whether he made any, I have really forgot. This I know, that the whole affair has been unlucky. There has been abundant time for conſultation, and a perfect ſeries of opportunities of which we have not been ſuffered to avail ourſelves.—It is now three weeks or a month ſince I corrected the proof-ſheets; was ſo hurried in the doing of it that I ſcarce knew what I wrote; and yet, in ſpite of all this hurry, the book is hitherto unpubliſhed. *Now*, indeed, it muſt be much too late for alterations, as D— has given me ſome room to expect a book this very day.—I know but little what he has done in conſequence of that diſcretionary power with which, through haſte, was obliged to intruſt him: but in what I have done *myſelf*, you may expect to find all the effects of *dulneſs precipitated*.

IT

It is now the twenty-third of February, and I have received no freſh account of our friend Dodſley's proceedings; nor am I able to *trace* them, as I expected, in the news-papers.

As to your ſhare of this Miſcellany, you can have no cauſe to be diſſatisfied.—After what manner he has thought proper to print Lady L—'s verſes, I am a good deal uncertain; but I apprehend he has not followed her own readings very preciſely, and that the blame thereof is to be thrown upon me.—I am concerned for the memory of my poor friend Whiſtler, and regret that his *better* pieces did not fall into my hands. I think that Dodſley, however, would have done him greater juſtice, had he inſerted his tranſlation of "Horace and Lydia." It is true, the tranſlations of that Ode are out of number; but *his*, if *I* miſtake not, had many beauties of its own.—I do not know whether I ever hinted to you, that *his* genius and that of Ovid were apparently congenial.—Had he cultivated his with equal care, perhaps the ſimilitude had been as obvious as that of your twin-daughters.—Mr. Graves has one ſmall well-poliſhed gem in this collection; his verſes upon Medals.—His little conjugal Love-ſong is alſo natural and eaſy.—I *told* you what I leaſt diſliked of my *own* puerilities.—If the printing of my Rural Inſcriptions be *invidious*, it was altogether owing to the inſtiga-

tion

tion of Sir G—L—. There are four or five little matters, which, if he have printed with my name, incorrect as they are, I shall be utterly disconsolate; at least, till I get sight of a succeeding impression.—For though I am not much solicitous about a poetical reputation (and indeed it is of little importance to so *domestic* an animal as I will); yet I could ill endure to pass for an affected, or verbal *pretender*.

And now no more upon the subject.—I have nothing to add that can the least amuse you.—You, who have been conversant with all the busy and the splendid scenes of life, can want no materials to make a letter entertaining.—Indeed you never *did*.—I shall be glad, however, to receive a *long* one, upon what subjects you please.

I have passed a very dull and unamusive winter; my health indeed rather better than I experienced it last year; but my head *as* confused, and my spirits *as* low. I live in hopes of an opportunity of seeing you at Harbury; but I begin now to receive visits as an honest beggar does an alms, with my humblest thanks for the favour, and with a despair of making a return.

Perhaps my next letter may discover somewhat more *resolution*: inclination I never want; being at all times with singular affection yours,

W. Shenstone.

LXXXIV. To

LXXXIV. To the ſame.

The Leaſowes,
April 3, 1755.

Dear Mr. Jago,

I HAVE ſo long expected the favour of a few lines from you, that I begin at laſt to queſtion whether you received the letter I ſent you. It was incloſed in one to Mr. M——, whom I requeſted to further it with all convenient expedition. I am neither able to recollect the whole contents of it; nor indeed, if I *were*, could I endure the thoughts of tranſcribing them. The chief intention of it, however, was to acquaint you of Mr. H—'s unhappy delay in the delivery of that letter with which you favoured me from Radway.

WHAT confirms me in a ſuſpicion that my laſt letter miſcarried is, that Mr. Wren lately acquainted me of your being at Wroxall upon buſineſs, and of your making ſome ſlight mention of Mr. Dodſley's publication, without intimating that you diſcovered any deſign you had of writing to me. This is mere preamble and ſtuff: implying nothing more than the deſire I have to *hear* from you, when it ought alſo to expreſs how impatiently I long to *ſee* you. Worldly concerns and my winterly ſtate of health have detained me at home for theſe many months paſt: worldly concerns may have confined you likewiſe; but as your health and ſpirits are univerſally

better

better than mine, and as you have [illegible] to travelling [illegible] myſelf, I would hope that my abſence [illegible] will never cauſe you to *neglect* any [illegible] of coming hither. For my own part, I have [illegible] upon a viſit to you all this winter; and [illegible] reſolve moſt ſtrenuouſly to perform it [illegible] But the many ſuch ſchemes of pleaſure in which I have been diſappointed are a ſort of check upon my expreſſions, and make me promiſe with fear. As to Dodſley's performance, which you muſt have received before this time, I will make no obſervations till I have the pleaſure of ſeeing you: and yet there are many points I would diſcuſs, and many accounts I want to give you. So many indeed, that they would furniſh out perhaps a ſuperficial drawling letter; but would ſerve infinitely better for converſation, with the book before us. The volume, I am told, is well received in town; though political intellgience muſt engroſs much of its preſent attention.

MR. HYLTON is in my neighbourhood, and upon the point of ſettling at his farm. Could you poſſibly ſpend a week with us, we would try to make it agreeable. At all events, I beg to hear from you; and that, not merely as it will afford me great pleaſure, but as, at the ſame time, it will eaſe me of ſome ſolicitude. I will not make this a long letter, though I wiſh to receive a long one in return; having

having a head very little qualified to add any thing that may amuſe you, though a heart very ſincerely and affectionately at your ſervice.

W. SHENSTONE.

LXXXV. To the ſame.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Jago, Dec. 14, 1756.

THOUGH the ſilence that has prevailed for ſo long a time betwixt us be, I fear, to be placed to *my* account, yet do I by no means imagine that you will deſire me to fill half this letter with apologies. Suffice it, that I owe all the world, at this time, either letters, viſits, or money: yet that my *heart* is as well diſpoſed in each of theſe reſpects, as that of any one perſon who is inſolvent. The regard indeed that I owe to you has been a troubleſome inmate within my boſom for ſome time paſt; making daily remonſtrances againſt the injuſtice which I have done it; and urging me ſtrenuouſly to take horſe, and make my *perſonal* apologies at Harbury.—— I return you many thanks for Mr. S——'s company, and for the ſight of the manuſcript which he ſhewed me. Alas! that I cannot ſpare money to drain and to improve my lands, or to put almoſt any part of his excellent rules in execution! and yet that Mr.

Childe of Kinlett (bearing my place always termed *a farm*) should come expecting to find all things managed here according to the perfection of *husbandry!* As little can I pretend to improve Mr. S——'s treatise, as his treatise would my farm: no farther at *most*, than in what regards the *plan* or *plan* of his performance. Yet could I wish to see both *it* and *him* again before he prints it, wishing him all the success which his very *endeavour* deserves. Assuredly the present is not the *time* for his publication: more *immediate* remedies than can be derived from agriculture are become absolutely requisite to relieve the sufferings of this nation.—I should be extremely well-pleased to visit you at Harbury, but cannot even propose to myself that happiness at *present*; and were I even to *promise*, have but too much reason to know the *uncertainty* of my *performance*. Yet am I sensible enough we *ought to meet*, if we purpose that what we print should have the advantage of our mutual criticisms. Let me then *conjure* you to come over, at your convenience, for a few days, that we may agree at least upon some *general* points, and make no worse a figure in the future Miscellany than we have done in the foregoing*.—But I have really more things to *say* than I will pretend to *scrawl* upon *paper*; nor can I endure to retail a few particulars, while I am impatient to communicate the whole.

* See the Edinburgh Review, No I.

LET

Let me acquaint you while I remember, that there is at this time a Mr. Duncombe and his ſon, clergymen, that are publiſhing a new tranſlation of Horace. Whatever you may think of their *ſucceſs*, after *Francis*, I believe I may pronounce them men of real merit, and in no wiſe deſtitute of learning or genius. They have requeſted me to communicate any *verſion* or *imitation* that I can furniſh, either of my own or of any friends; wherefore, if you *have* any thing of this ſort, I ſhould be glad if you would put it in my power to oblige them. The ſon has an "Ode to "Health" in the fourth volume of Dodſley's Miſcellany.

Under the head of intelligence, I have mighty little to convey.—The houſe at Hagley is in a manner finiſhed, ſo far as concerns the ſhell; and wants nothing beſides a portico to be as compleat as moſt in England.—Pray remember me to Mr. Talbot, Mr. Miller, and Mr. Holbeach; ſhould they call upon me next year, they will find my place better worth their notice.

I am, and *have* been ever, cordially and moſt affectionately,

Your moſt obedient ſervant,

W. Shenstone.

LXXXVI. To Mr. GRAVES, with ſome Account of Politics and Poetry.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, April 4, 1755.

YOU will be harraſſed with my letters till you condemn my exceſſive leiſure as loudly as I have lamented that you ſhould ever feel the *want* of it. Nor is it a point ſo eaſily decided *which* of us may be the greater *ſufferer*; you through my *officiouſneſs*, or I by your long *ſilence*. Yet the partiality which you have ever ſhewn me will, I think, diſpoſe you to receive my letters more patiently than it is in my power to ſuſtain the loſs of *yours*. After all, I ſhould not write at preſent, but that the Miſcellanies with which Dodſley compliments us arrived laſt week at The Leaſowes. I deſire therefore you would acquaint me, whether the ſett that he means for you ſhould remain here till your arrival; or if you chuſe that I ſhould ſend it by the Birmingham-ſtage to Bath. Having made this enquiry, I was thinking to conclude; but cannot reconcile myſelf to the *novelty* of ſending *you* three empty pages. The Parliament will riſe too ſoon for the publication of my "Rural Elegance;" and having performed my promiſe to Dodſley, I think no more about ſuch *laurels* as the *public* can beſtow upon me, but am giving all my attention to ſuch as I can purchaſe of my nurſery-man. I wiſh, however, that the volume

lume may recompence Dodſley for his trouble: I may alſo add, for his ingenuity, and for his politeneſs in giving each of us a compleat ſett. They are elegantly bound, and all as much alike as poſſible.

THE preſent criſis of ſtate-affairs does not ſeem to favour his publication, as the attention of the public muſt lean greatly to that quarter. I ſaw a letter from Sir William M—— (who correſponds with Lady Luxborough), which placed the ſtruggles of the miniſtry in a clearer light than they had yet appeared to me. It ſeems that perſons of all denominations are for carrying on the war with vigour; and the King's application for a Vote of Credit was received with general approbation. The zeal of the Parliament was indeed ſo remarkable on this occaſion, that, inſtead of the 600,000 *l.* at firſt intended, it was thought proper to propoſe a million. But the ſervices were aſcertained, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer made accountable for the application of it. The augmentation of the fleet with 20,000 ſeamen; the raiſing 5000 marines on a plan of dividing them into ſmall companies, which will render them more uſeful both by ſea and land; the completion and reinforcement of the Iriſh regiments; are the uſes to which this million is to be appropriated. Mr. Fox and his land-war-party ſat mute, whilſt Mr. Legge with great openneſs and perſpicuity explained the preſent ſchemes; as they were calcu-

lated, to exert our whole ſtrength at ſea, and, if poſſible, no where elſe. Mr. Dodington, who, it ſeems, has not ſpoke of many years, charmed every body. His wit did not only entertain, but animate and affect his hearers. "*It were better*, he ſaid, *than loſe* "*the dominion of the Ocean, that the Ocean ſhould over-*"*whelm us: for what Briton cou'd wiſh to leave a poſ-*"*terity crawling upon this iſland, only to feel the ty-*"*ranny, and ſwell the victories, of France?*" It ſeems, F—, in his oppoſition to the Duke of Newcaſtle, is ſupported by the Duke of Cumberland, his army, and the Scotch: that the miniſtry (or the D. of N—'s party) ſeem not diſpleaſed with a proſpect of uniting with the Tories, who now hold the balance; and it ſeems the Tories, by Sir William's letter, are as little diſpleaſed to unite with the Miniſtry.

You will gueſs that good part of this political account is *tongue-held*; and you will gueſs aright. I had ſome thoughts that it might amuſe you, and had no occaſion to uſe other expreſſions.—Let me now, once more, return to the futile objects of my *own* amuſement. The impreſſion upon this letter will be taken from my new ſeal. The motto that I have pitched upon is, SVETLENT MEMORIA: though I yet retain ſome hankering after the ſingle word PRAETERITA. Probably this, however, is not the laſt ſeal that I ſhall cauſe this man to cut in ſteel. The altar is not yet finiſhed: ANTE OMNIA MVSAE; but

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it does not quite ſatisfy me.—I will incloſe the two laſt letters I received from Mr. Dodſley; but you muſt not think I build too much upon any compliment which he there makes me.—It is true, I think him a very ſincere man; but he cannot have been converſant ſo long with modern-writers, but he muſt conjecture, when their piece is publiſhed, that they a little hunger for applauſe. I am now uncertain whether you will receive a letter from him; as he has, unaccountably I think, ſent your books *hither*, and not to Bath. I am, however, fully ſatisfied, that your firſt and laſt pieces, more *eſpecially*, do credit to his collection, and muſt pleaſe all perſons of taſte.

I DESIRE my beſt reſpects to Mrs. Graves, who will be pleaſed to ſee the affection that ſubſiſts betwixt you perpetuated. She will alſo feel ſome ſatisfaction in the profeſſions of friendſhip that are made you by your moſt affectionate and faithful humble ſervant,

W. SHENSTONE.

LXXXVII. To the ſame, with a Recommendation of Mr. DODSLEY to his Acquaintance.

From Mr. Baſkerville's, Birmingham, July 27, 1756.

Dear Mr. Graves,

IT were needleſs for me to recommend to you a perſon whom you ſo truly eſteem as Mr. Dodſley; and from whom you will gladly receive a viſit, not more upon *my* account, than upon *his* and your *own*. —All I beg is, that, conſidering the ſhortneſs of his time at Bath, you will be acquainted with him at firſt ſight; which, I think, ſhould ever be a maxim with perſons of genius and humanity.—He has made a few days extremely agreeable to me at The Leaſowes; has been ſhewing me his new Tragedy, which I wiſhed you alſo might peruſe. If I be not unaccountably impoſed upon by my friendſhip for the writer, the extraordinary merit of this performance is altogether unqueſtionable.—I will not inform you through what hands it has paſſed in town; becauſe I would have you communicate your ſentiments to him with entire freedom, being aſſured the delicacy of them may *yet* be of ſervice, and that the openneſs with which you communicate them will be infinitely pleaſing to Mr. Dodſley. He has done me the honour to aſk me for an epilogue:—I *wiſh*, but *fear* to undertake it.—Should any lucky hint occur to *you*, I well know how much you are able to manage

nage it to advantage. In that caſe, I would beg a line from you the firſt opportunity.—What talk I of a line from you, who am at this very time many letters and apologies in your debt! but I cannot add many ſyllables to the letter I am writing—I will write again in a few days. Mean time, my compliments to Mrs. Graves; and remember, that Mr. Dodſley and you become well acquainted at firſt ſight.

I am ever, dear Mr. Graves,

Your moſt affectionate humble ſervant,

W. SHENSTONE.

LXXXVIII. To the ſame, on Mr. DODSLEY and his Works.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, Mar. 7, 1757.

I HAVE paſſed a very dull and unamuſive winter here—the worſe, for being neither *diſpoſed* nor *qualified* to keep up a correſpondence with my friends: with *you*, among the *chief*; and yet it is upon you that I muſt depend to make up my deficiencies with Mr. Dodſley.—The poor man has been afflicted with the moſt *laſting* fit of the gout he ever underwent before.—His patience, on theſe occaſions, is inimitable.—His excurſion to the *Regions of Terror and Pity* is not the only inſtance of his ability to compoſe verſes in the midſt of pain. When he ſent me a copy of it,

he

he let me know, that he had tranſmitted another to you by the ſame poſt: I ſhould be glad to receive your remarks upon it, ere I communicate my own. I have, for ſome weeks paſt, found my head ſo terribly confuſed, that it has been with difficulty I could *think* or *expreſs* myſelf on the moſt ſuperficial topic. I hope, in a little time, to be able to examine it more attentively than I can at preſent: yet, in the mean while, muſt acknowledge, that I think his ſubject capable of furniſhing extraordinary beauties for an Ode: and *ſuch*, I think, he ſhould *call* it; dropping the narrative parts and the connexions as much as poſſible. I cannot wiſh him to print it without very *material* alterations, and what would occaſion almoſt the ſame trouble as it would require to *new-write* it. I do not mean this as a condemnation of what he has already done, ſo much as a proof of my opinion how much he will be able to improve it. *After all*, it will ſcarce affect me half ſo much as his Tragedy. He is ſo *honeſt* a man, that the work he has to give the world is much better than the ſpecimen: or, to borrow an idea from *my ſituation*, the grain that he has to deliver will prove much better than the ſample. It is with ſhame I acknowledge I have not yet ſent him his epilogue; and I feel the greater compunction of mind upon this ſcore, as it is poſſible he may impute my neglect to Garrick's refuſal of his play. "It is weighs nothing with you or me; a thouſand motives may affect a Manager,

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that have little or nothing to do with the merit of the performance; yet he may ſo far thank Mr. Garrick, that whatever his refuſal takes from the *reputation* of his Tragedy, it will, through Dodſley's induſtry, add apparently to its value. I have not yet been able to ſatisfy myſelf with every part of your epilogue, and muſt either omit ſending it at preſent, or muſt ſend him an imperfect copy. If you write to him, let me beg you to give the moſt favourable account you *can* of me.

Somebody acquainted me (I think it was Mr. Talbot) that your old friend Ballard had bequeathed you his coins for a legacy. I was truly glad to hear it; but have wondered ſince, that you never once informed me of ſo conſiderable an acquiſition.

I remember a poem of yours, called ——, upon the preſent taſte in gardening; which you will not wonder if my late employments make me wiſh once more to ſee. Be ſo kind as to ſend me a copy of this, as well as of any other little pieces that you have in your bureau. Some of yours deſerve a better place than what is aſſigned them in the Magazine. In particular, I remember that upon Enigmas, and Mopſy. Be aſſured, I will make no *uſe* of *any* without your previous conſent. You know, I ſuppoſe, that Dodſley's other Miſcellanies do not appear before next winter.—I received from him, together

gether with his Ode, a few Elegies publiſhed by Mr. Whitehead. They are, I think, worth your peruſal; and deſigned by my worthy friend to excite my emulation.—Alas! that I am ſo ill able to deſerve the encouragements which I receive from him!

My neighbour Baſkerville, at the cloſe of this month, publiſhes his fine edition of Virgil. It will, for *type* and *paper*, be a perfect curioſity. He follows the Cambridge edition.

What think you of their management in regard to Mr. Byng? I cannot help thinking the King ſhould *pardon* him. The Court-martial, by acquitting him of cowardice or diſaffection, have left no *motive* for his *negligence*, beſide an *error of his judgement*: for we *cannot* impute it to *ſupineneſs*, *indifference*, or *inattention*. And then to ſentence a man for error, is to expect infallibility. That twelfth article of war is moſt undoubtedly ill-expreſſed.—Pray do not forget my beſt reſpects to Mrs. Graves.—Let me hear from you ſoon, and believe me ever yours,

W. Shenstone.

LXXXIX. On

LXXXIX. On the ſame.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, April 8, 1757.

WHAT remarks I had to make upon our friend Dodſley's Ode, I ſent him the laſt poſt. I would gladly have occaſioned them to paſs by Claverton; but, having delayed them ſo long, I was impatient to convince him that I had not *wholly* diſregarded his requeſt. They are indeed pretty copious: and yet I have reſerved to myſelf the privilege of re-criticiſing when I ſee his altered copy. I recommended to him the addition which you propoſed, and ſome others; and if he will but take the pains that I have chalked out for him, I doubt not that he will render it an excellent Ode, though he may not find it a very *popular* one. I have alſo ſent him a copy of our epilogue, not much different from what you ſaw; to theſe I added my little Ode on Lady Luxborough's furniſhing her library, and Perry's Verſes upon the Malvern-waters. At the cloſe of theſe laſt, there appears (with Perry's approbation), a ſhort addreſs to Dr. Wall of Worceſter; a very eminent phyſician, and the great patron of this mineral, who has promoted a ſubſcription in the county towards *building*, near this well, for the accommodation of ſtrangers.

I PURPOSE

I PURPOSE alſo to give Dodſley the little Ode I incloſe; and would beg the favour of you to adviſe me concerning the additional ſtanzas, to fix the readings in the reſt, and to return me the copy.

I COME now to analyze your remark on Ballard's legacy; which is indeed very ingenious, but will ſcarce bear examination: nor do I think that you rather wiſh to have *found* that ſet of medals, than to have them *given* you by a deceaſed friend. Aſſuredly, if we do not allow pleaſure to be *predominant* in this kind of melancholy, we deſtroy the foundation of all tragic or elegiac writings; Melpomene has no place amongſt the Muſes; and the pains that we have taken with our friend Dodſley's penſive Ode have been employed to no purpoſe. But you want not theſe pedantic flouriſhes, and are wholly of my mind.

MARTIN's Magazine is, I believe, pretty obſcure; and I wonder where you got a ſight of it. It was, however, fortunate enough for *me* that you gave no copy of "James Dawſon." I never yet ſaw your verſes *on that Grotto*, or from *Phædrus*, and I want to ſee your W— once more, concerning which you are ſilent. Your "Pepper-box" and "Mopſy" might, I think, appear in Dodſley's Miſcellany, either *with* or *without* your name. I alſo want a copy of your verſes

verſes upon Riddles; and whenever you have a leiſure hour, ſhould be glad if you would look them out and ſend them.

Go, and think yourſelf an happy man; at leaſt, if your children be recovered, as I am inclined to think they are: and give my ſervice to Mrs. Graves, for the happineſs that the occaſions you; of which I cannot but partake, being, with conſtant and ſincere affection, your moſt obliged humble ſervant,

W. SHENSTONE.

XC. On the ſame.

Dear Mr. Graves, About 1757.

DO you know my hand-writing?—It is really ſuch a length of time ſince you had demands upon me for letters, that I am hardly able to enumerate the ſeveral cauſes of my neglect. *This* I know, that ſcarce a day has paſſed, during this interval of ſilence, in which I have not *remembered* you with the moſt affectionate eſteem.—I *hope* you correſpond with our friend Dodſley; and that it is not altogether diſagreeable to you, to find he is printing ſome of your verſes. He has many, alas! *too* many, of mine; which I ſuffered him to take away in ſummer, and which the ſtate of my winter health and ſpirits renders me but ill able to reviſe. I believe, I am,

I am, even now, the principal cauſe that his two volumes remain yet unpubliſhed; nor can I expreſs the pain it gives me, to be thus detrimental to his intereſts, and to delay the publication of ſo much better pieces than my own. I am alſo diſſatisfied upon *another ſcore*: I mean, that I have been wanting to myſelf, in not aſking the benefit of your advice; which I have heretofore experienced to be at once ſo *comfortable* and ſo *advantageous*; but although the ſcheme was projected in ſummer, the buſineſs of correction was (by *me* at leaſt) deferred till winter, and then I had neither ſpirits to *correct* or to *correſpond*.

I AM really as much obliged to you for the pains which you took on my behalf in London, as though the *ſubject* of your enquiry were a thing of more *importance* to me; but, indeed, you can hardly conceive how indifferent I am now grown, not only as to articles of *that ſort*, but to aught that regards external ſplendour.

I REALLY have not time to enter upon the merits of inoculation; but am very ſure that Mrs. G—'s danger was enough to influence *your* determination. I am heartily glad to hear of her recovery; and can but look upon the weeks which I purpoſe to paſs ſome time hereafter with you at Claverton, as the moſt agreeable of any that belong to the remainder of my life. I am ſenſible, that if I *coveted* to *ſhine*

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in poetry, I ſhould loſe no time in viſiting public places: but my wiſhes of that ſort are moſt extremely limited, and I ſhall viſit *you* on the account of *friendſhip*; that is (paſt all doubt) on a much *better principle*.

I HAVE *long* meant to write to you, and have accordingly given *ſome* anſwer to moſt parts of your laſt letter. Nevertheleſs, the occaſion of this preſent letter is quite of another kind.—A young painter of my acquaintance is adviſed to go to Bath; has a recommendation to the Biſhop of B—, who will introduce him to the Duke of N—. And though I cannot ſo eaſily bring him acquainted with nobles or prime-miniſters, I can give him directions to my friend, who, in point of taſte, is their ſuperior. The perſon then, who, I ſuppoſe, will be the bearer of this letter, has, by dint of mere ingenuity, riſen to a conſiderable eminence in fruit-pieces, &c. He has been employed by Lord Lyttelton, and is much admired at Oxford: for my own part, I believe you will think he is in few reſpects inferior to, and has (if I am not miſtaken) ſome advantages of, Stranover; but you will ſee his pieces. All I have to ſay further on the occaſion is, that he is a native of our pariſh, and a particular friend of *mine*; and if it were in your power to promote his intereſt at Bath, you would not only highly gratify *me*, but at the ſame time do a ſervice to one of the leaſt aſſuming,

moſt ingenious, and moſt amiable men I know — I beg my beſt reſpects to your family, and am, &c. Mr. Graves, moſt affectionately yours,

W. SHENSTONE.

XCI. On the ſame.

The Leaſowes,
May 30, 1758.

Dear Mr. Graves,

I THANK God, I have recovered a tolerable degree of health this ſpring; though by no means free from ſo much heavineſs and laſſitude, as renders me averſe to all activity both of body and mind. In the courſe of my diſorder, ſo long as I could bear to think of *any* ſublunary enjoyment, I remembered my friends, and of courſe thought much of *you*; but its advances were ſo precipitate, when I ſent for the phyſicians, that I ſoon received a *wrench* from every object of this world: and it was by ſlow degrees, even after my recovery, that my mind took ſo much root again as appears neceſſary for its immediate ſupport. I ſuppoſe you have been informed that my fever was in great meaſure hypochondriacal; and left my nerves ſo extremely ſenſible, that, even on no very intereſting ſubject, I could readily think myſelf into a vertigo: I had almoſt ſaid an epilepſy; for ſurely I was oftentimes near it. It became, therefore, expedient for my recovery, to amuſe myſelf with a ſucceſſion of the moſt trivial objects I could find;

find; and this kind of careleſſneſs I have indulged till it is grown into an habit. Even letters to my friends are hardly conſiſtent with my rule of health; yet I could be no longer ſilent with regard to *you*, without feeling a ſenſation that would hurt me *more*. This may fairly enough be termed the firſt *letter* I have wrote ſince my recovery; wherein if I ſhould tell you one half that I am inclined to do, relating to this dreadful illneſs, what room ſhould I then leave to ſpeak on any other ſubject? I muſt, therefore, tell thoſe things by word of mouth, or write them ſome other time. The journies which my friends, and indeed phyſicians, propoſe for me, are what certainly bid faireſt for the completion of my cure: yet there are many, many things, which, however unfit for the taſk, I muſt endeavour to adjuſt before I can leave home with any poſſibility of enjoyment. Need I mention any other than my curſed embarraſſment with D—; who, during my *danger*, was induced to ſtop proceedings; but is now beginning law afreſh; and, by the removal of tenants from *his* ſhare of the Harborough eſtate, has now wriggled himſelf into poſſeſſion of almoſt one half of *mine*? However, I am not without hopes of ſeeing all terminated in a little time; nor entirely without a proſpect of ſeeing you at Claverton this ſummer. That you may think this the more probable, I am preſſed by two young gentlemen, whom I very much eſteem, to accompany them on a viſit to Mr. Bamfylde in Somerſetſhire.

These two gentlemen are, Mr. Dean and Mr. Knight. Perhaps you may have heard of Mr. Bamfylde, who is very much at Bath; is there now with his lady, or has left the place but lately; and whose fortune, person, figure, and accomplishments, can hardly leave him long unnoticed in any place where he resides. Yet my visit to Estercomb must be of secondary consequence to me, whilst you live by the road-side. I am much obliged to you for your compliment on my Poematia in Dodsley's Miscellanies; which came very seasonably, considering how I had been mortified by the first sight of what was done. To speak the truth, there are many things appear there very contrary to my intentions; but which I am more desirous may be attributed to the unseasonableness of my fever, than to my friend D—'s precipitation. My purpose was to acknowledge as *mine*, none of the pieces which now follow the longer Ode to Lady Luxborough. Her name was actually erased; as also my own at the close of your Fable. The verses by Mrs. Bennet to Mr. Richardson were absolutely new to me; where my name occurs again. All this is against me; as a thing in itself invidious to have one's name recur so often, and as my *own lines contradict* the merit which my friends so liberally allow me.—The verses of mine in the sixth volume (which was printed before the fifth) were printed without my knowledge; and when I sent up an improved copy, it arrived a good deal too late. As things happen,

I am made to own ſeveral things of inferior merit to thoſe which I *do not* own.—All this is againſt me; but my thoughts are avocated from this edition, and wholly fixed upon a future; wherein, I hope, Dodſley will be prevailed upon to omit ſome things alſo from *other* hands which diſcredit his collection: and, to balance *all my diſcomforts* on this head, the world will know that I am eſteemed by a perſon whom I eſteem ſo much as you.—I know not how it happens, but the taſte for humorous poetry does not prevail at this time: yet I cannot agree with Mr. J. Warton, that it is no poetry *at all*, any more than that a good repreſentation of Dutch boors is not a picture.—His brother, the Profeſſor, is to be here with his pupil Lord Donnegal, &c. this ſummer.—Mr. Spence and Mr. Dodſley will ſtay a day or two here this month in their way to Scotland; and Mr. Home, the author of Douglas, &c. called on me, and we ſpent an evening together at Admiral Smith's. Thus my *ferme ornée* procures me interviews with perſons whom it might otherwiſe be my *wiſh* rather than my good-fortune to ſee. Would to God, it could attract *you*, whom I more long to ſee than any one! and let me tell you, there were conſiderable additions made to it laſt year: Dodſley's preſent of Faunus; a new Gothic-building, or rather a ſkreen, which coſt ten pounds; and the ruins of a Priory, which, however, make a tenant's houſe, that pays me tolerable poundage.—I am growing a little into *your*

taſte: why ſhould not you advance farther into *virtù*? I mean, I have a love for medals, by means of ſome that have been given me: yet do not think that I ſhall ever rival *you*—my object is only *beauty*, and I love only thoſe of exquiſite workmanſhip; ſo that this is no more a rivalſhip than that of two perſons who admire the ſex, but love different individuals; a rivalſhip, which, I truſt, is more likely to cement our friendſhip than diſunite us; which it is my *conviction* and my *comfort* no *ſort* of rivalſhip will ever do. I have hardly room to expreſs my good wiſhes for long health and happineſs to Mrs. Graves and your little family, and to ſubſcribe myſelf, my dear friend,

Your ever affectionate humble ſervant,

W. SHENSTONE.

XCII. On the ſame.

Dear Mr. Graves, July 22, 1758.

IT gives me great anxiety when I reflect how long I have waited for the ſatisfaction of a line from you. I beg, if you are alive and well, you will let me know ſo by the next poſt.

Mr. Dodſley and Mr. Spence have been here and ſtayed a week with me. The former was in certain hopes of ſeeing you in town; but I do not find that he

he either saw or heard from you, which *adds* to my anxiety.

I HAVE seen few whom I liked so much, upon so little acquaintance, as Mr. Spence; extremely polite, friendly, chearful, and master of an infinite fund of subjects for agreeable conversation. Had my affairs permitted me, they had certainly drawn me with them into Scotland; whither they are gone, for about a month, upon a journey of curiosity.

I BELIEVE it will give you pleasure to hear that my law-suit with D— is accommodated, by the generous interposition of my Lord Stamford; concerning whose benevolence and magnanimity it is impossible for me to speak in the terms which they deserve. It is ended, I hope, not very *disadvantageously* for me; apparently with *one* advantage, of being intirely exculpated in the opinion of all mankind. The common method (as M. Bruyere observes) is to condemn *both* on these occasions. This suits people's indolence, and favours their impartiality. And though the equitableness of my whole conduct in this affair was self-evident to all that were near me, yet I found many that were inclined to blame us *both*, and *some* that I could never convince till *now* that the fault was not *wholly* mine.

YOUR "Pepper-box and Salt-seller" are in [illegible] of the Chronicles.—They pillage Dodsley's two last volumes of all that is worth perusal—I surely have some friend amongst the writers of the Monthly Review; for I have not only escaped a flogging, but am treated with great civility.

I NEVER know how to leave off when I begin writing to you, having always a great deal to say: I only purposed you a few lines, to desire you would write directly. Pray make my best compliments to Mrs. Graves, and believe me ever yours most invariably.

W. SHENSTONE.

XCIII. To the same, containing an Account of his Excursions and Amusements.

The Leasowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, Nov. 25, 1758.

I HAVE had daily expectations of a line from you these two months: conscious, however, that I did not deserve any; and affording a manifest instance of the infatuations of self-love. The last letter that I received of yours is dated the close of July, since which time I have been chiefly engaged in my customary amusements; embellishing my farm, and receiving the company that came to see it. My principal

principal *excurſions* have been to Enville, on Lord Grey's birth-day; to Lord Ward's, upon another invitation; and to the Worceſter Muſic-meeting. I need not mention what an appearance there was of company at Worceſter; dazzling enough, you may ſuppoſe, to a perſon who, like me, has not ſeen a public place theſe ten years. Yet I made a ſhift to enjoy the ſplendour, as well as the muſic that was prepared for us. I preſume, nothing in the way of harmony can poſſibly go further than the Oratorio of "The Meſſiah." It ſeems the beſt compoſer's beſt compoſition. Yet I fancied I could obſerve *ſome parts* in it, wherein Handel's judgement failed him; where the muſic was not equal, or was even *oppoſite*, to what the words required. Very many of the nobleſſe, whom I had ſeen at The Leaſowes, were as complaiſant to me as poſſible; whereas it was my *former* fate, in public places, to be as little regarded as a journeyman ſhoe-maker.—There I firſt ſaw our preſent Biſhop; alſo our late Biſhop's monument, which is fine.—Laſtly, there I firſt ſaw my Lady Coventry; to whom, I believe, one muſt allow all that the world allows in point of beauty. She is certainly the moſt *unexceptionable* figure of a woman I ever ſaw; and made moſt of the ladies there ſeem of almoſt another *ſpecies*. On the whole, I was not a little pleaſed that I had made this excurſion; and returned with double reliſh to the *enjoyment* of my *farm*. It is now high time to take ſome notice of your

your obliging letter. I think I was not told the purport of the journey you made to London; ſo can only ſay, I am very ſorry for the aggravating circumſtances of your diſappointment; and hope, long before this time, that Mrs. Graves is quite recovered. —Did I forget to make your excuſes to Dodſley or no?—he was here (as I remember) ſoon after, with Mr. Spence, in their way to Scotland—Mr. Spence, the very man *you* would like, and who would like *you*, of all mankind. He took my Elegies into Scotland, and ſent them back on his return, with a ſheet or two of criticiſms, and an handſome letter.—How much am I intereſted in the preſervation of his friendſhip!—and yet, ſuch is my *deſtiny* (for I can give it no other name), I have never wrote to him *ſince*. This *impartiality* of my neglect, you muſt accept *yourſelf* as *ſome* apology: but to proceed; Mr. Spence choſe himſelf an oak here for a ſeat, which I have inſcribed to him,

("SPENCE'S OAK.)
"EXIMIO. NOSTRO. CRITONI.
"CVI. DICARI.* VELLET.
"MVSARVM. OMNIVM. ET. GRATIARVM. CHORVS.
"DICAT. AMICITIA."

I ABSOLUTELY *forgot* to talk to Dodſley about your ——, and I am vexed; becauſe I could, with a ſafe conſcience, have raiſed his idea of your

* Subintelligè SEDEM ISTAM (hanc).

abilities,

abilities. However, it is not too late, even if you care to publiſh it this winter.—His play comes on (I fancy *this very night*) at Covent-garden. What he ſays in behalf of this ſtep is, that there was no glimpſe of probability, that Garrick would ever admit it at the other houſe *.—Mrs. Bellamy is his Cleone, and ſpeaks the epilogue, of which more anon. I ſuppoſe he acts by Lord Cheſterfield's opinion: for I know, when he was going to print it (ſince he came home) with a *proper* dedication to Mr. Garrick, my Lord then prevented him, telling him, it *would* be acted one day or other.—Did I ever ſend you a copy of the epilogue, with all the additions and alterations? Dodſley firſt liked, then diſliked it, and laſtly liked it again; only deſiring me to ſoften the ſatire, ſhorten the whole (for it was upwards of ſixty lines), and add a complimentary cloſe to the *boxes*.—All this I have endeavoured, and ſent it him laſt Monday. *You* would not care to own it: and he would fain have *me*; but I think neither of us ſhould run the riſque, where ſo little honour is to be acquired; yet Mr. Melmoth's name to the prologue is an inducement.—I was very near ſurprizing you at Claverton this autumn, with my friend young Knight, in his way to Mr. Bamfylde's; but he goes *again* in ſpring, and I ſhall certainly accompany him; I have *beſpoke*, but not yet *procured* any, horſes for my chaiſe,

* He ſays, the players liked it, and ſeemed inclined to take pains with it.

It

It is a neat one, you will find; and I have made two, or three excurſions in it.—I ſaw Mr. Patchen's "Topographical Letters" ſoon after they were publiſhed.—If you continue to me the honour of a ſhield in your Gothic alcove, the field ſhould be either "Or, three king-fiſhers proper," or, with the addition of a chief gules, three trefoils argent—no bar, cheveron bend, &c.—More of this when I write again. Motto, FLVMINA AMEM, SYLVASQVE INGLORIVS—RVRA MIHI.

I CANNOT recollect my company of the ſeaſon, to tell it you.—Sir Francis Daſhwood, Lord Litchfield, and Mr. Sheldon, were here together in the beginning of the autumn; and I have ſtrong invitations to viſit them.—I have a very genteel letter from Sir Francis, offering me gold-fiſhes; and I have a double inducement to viſit Mr. Sheldon, as he lives near Mickleton, and is the moſt agreeable man alive.—Your acquaintance Lord W— dined and ſpent good part of a day with me. Under a ſort of gloomy appearance, a man of admirable ſenſe and ſome humour. I put him in mind of you, and the remarkable monument at Cambden.—Mr. Thomas Warton was alſo here with Lord Donnegal, and has ſince ſent me his "Inſcriptions," which are rather too ſimple, even for my taſte.—Biſhop of Worceſter with his family and company—Lord Willoughby—Lord Foley—I mention Lord Foley the rather, becauſe I ſhall

shall call on your friend Dr. Charleton (who was also here) to pass a day or two with me at Whitley.—I shall pass also a day or two at our Bishop's, whom I met since at Enville. These two (*propose* what I *will* besides) will probably be the principal, or only excursions that I shall make this winter.—God send it may no more affect my health than it has hitherto done.—I am at present tolerably well, and live more temperately than before.—Would to God you could come over; go with me to Dr. Charleton's, and Lord Foley's, and Lord Stamford's, and pass a week here! I would meet you with my chaise at Worcester, or even farther. I have finished a building opposite to the new stable, which I think you saw.—They together give my house a degree of splendour. Did you see my Priory?—a tenant's house, one room whereof is to have Gothic shields round the cornice.—I am in some doubt whether to make it an House of Lords or House of Commons; if the former, my private friends will have shields round my Gothic bed-chamber.—The wretch is cursed that *begins* a letter with no better a pen than I *finish* one with. My dear friend, write directly a long letter.—Keep me alive in the memory of Mrs. Graves, and believe me ever yours most affectionately,

W. SHENSTONE.

I HAVE received a present of the Edinburgh Homer (2 vols. folio) from the Solicitor General, Mr. Pringle; and many other books from other gentlemen of Scotland.

XCIV. To

XCIV. To the ſame, in Expectation of a Viſit.

Dear Mr. Graves, Chriſtmas, 1758.

THERE *can* be nothing more welcome to me than the intelligence which you give of your intended viſit at The Leaſowes.—God knows how few of theſe interviews may for the future be allotted to us; and I ſhould be glad at leaſt to teſtify the joy which they afford me, by meeting you at Birmingham, or elſewhere within one day's journey for my chaiſe.—Pray be ſo good as to give me one more letter before you ſet out.—Very glad ſhould I be to pay my reſpects to your brother at Mickleton, for whom I have the trueſt reſpect; but dare not give encouragement, for fear that aught ſhould interfere.—I have ten thouſand things to ſay to you; but will defer them, I think, *all*. I am poſitive your —— may be made *advantageous* to you by means of Dodſley; and even *reputable*, if you ſo pleaſe.—Will not Mrs. G— accompany you? pray convince her of my ſincere regard.

I WANT to congratulate you on your eſcape from the ſmall-pox, in a manner *different* from your ordinary acquaintance; yet am not able to expreſs my ſentiments— gueſs the reſt; knowing, and ſufficiently knowing, that I am, with conſtancy and ardour, your moſt affectionate friend,

W. SHENSTONE.

XCV. To

XCV. To Mr. JAGO.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Jago, Jan. 6, 1759.

IF you knew the maxims on which I conduct myſelf, you might call me perhaps *unpolite*; but, I think, by no means *unfriendly*; I mean with reſpect to the *ordinary congratulations* on your *marriage*. Were you and I leſs intimate, leſs experienced, and leſs aſſured friends, it had been no venial omiſſion to have neglected ſuch a ceremony. Perhaps I ſhould not have neglected it; but as I have the ſatisfaction of believing that you would rejoice in any ſucceſs of mine, ſo I hope you would not diſtruſt my ſentiments upon any change of your condition which you yourſelf eſteemed for the *better*. I do indeed, my worthy friend, wiſh you much joy, both *now* and at *all* times; and you will ever diſcern it in my face, as often as fortune grants us an interview. Mr. S— is a benevolent man, and I am ſure would withhold no information that tended to *illuſtrate* our friendſhip on either ſide.

I HAVE thoughts of proceeding on to Harbury, whenever I come to Mr. Wren's; as I have long enough made my friend a promiſe, and intend ere long to do. Many reaſons occur why I cannot ſet forward to-morrow morning: are theſe reaſons ſubſtantial,

ſtantial, or no other than the ſly and ſophiſtical inſinuations of indolence?—ſurely the former.

DODSLEY, and indeed Mr. Spence, both expect me in town this February.—I fear it will not *be*; but if it *ſhould*, how readily would I give notice, and become obliged to you for your company.

THOUGH I ſhould have *expected* you would ſelect a partner whoſe ſociety you could enjoy, yet I was not a little ſatisfied with the hint given me in your letter, as well as in one I had before received from Mr. S—. It is not for ſuch ladies as you and I eſteem, that Mrs. * Bellamy's extraordinary lecture was intended; and a *lecture* it would have been with a vengeance, had not D— omitted ſome thirty lines, and ſubſtituted about twelve or fourteen of his own. However, he is now going to print his fourth edition of it; in which the original epilogue will be reſtored, as well as conſiderable improvements introduced into his play. He ſold two thouſand of his firſt edition the very firſt day he publiſhed it.

I HAVE ſo *much* to tell you, and of ſo *various* kinds, that I am afraid to expatiate upon *any* one article. Cannot you make a ſhift to call upon me, before *my public life* arrives?—I would ſend my chaiſe to meet you at any place you ſhould appoint.

* See Epilogue to Cleone.

I HAVE

I HAVE paſſed my winter hitherto pretty chearfully amongſt my books, in what I *call* my library. It now better deſerves that name, by the form I have given it, and the volumes I have added. Mr. S— would tell you ſomething of my *other* occupations.

I COULD wiſh that you would favour me with a copy of your "Eſſay on Electricity," and with any new copy of verſes of your own, or of your friends.—Be not apprehenſive: there ſhall nothing appear in print of your compoſition any more, without your explicit conſent.—And yet I have thoughts of amuſing myſelf with the publication of a ſmall Miſcellany from neighbour Baſkerville's preſs if I can ſave myſelf harmleſs as to expence—I purpoſe it no larger than a "Lanſdown's," a "Philips's," or a "Pomfret's Poems."

HAVE you read my friend Dr. Grainger's Tibullus? It affords you an elegant edition of a good tranſlation and of the text. He is engaged in a war with S—, and has juſt ſent me his pamphlet; which I could wiſh you to read, in order to form a judgement of S—'s character.—Spence, I ſee, has advertiſed his "Parallel betwixt Malliabecqui and his "Taylor." It is merely a charitable deſign: and ſuch are now all Spence's views.

WHAT remains of my paper muſt be employed not in *mere* ceremony, although in ſomething that bears

the form of it: in my beſt compliments to Mrs. Jago, and my offer, not indeed of a part of the friendſhip which I owe you, but rather of an equal quantity; in an aſſurance of the cordiality with which I ſhall rejoice to ſee both her and you; and in confirmation of that affection with which I have ever been, and am, my good friend, your moſt obedient ſervant,

W. SHENSTONE.

XCVI. To Mr. GRAVES, on their ſeveral Situations and Compoſitions.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, April 18, 1759.

YOU will think my ſilence long; and I ſhould be ſorry to *have* you quite regardleſs of it; although, I fear, it muſt be my fate to treſpaſs frequently upon your kind ſolicitude.—I have no excuſe to make, beſide ſome frivolous avocations, and *much* of that heavineſs and laſſitude which diſinclines one to write letters.—I paſſed the former part of my winter with more vivacity than I did the latter, or even the incipient ſpring; owing, poſſibly, to theſe cold winds, which will not permit me to uſe my wonted exerciſe. You will laugh at the word *vivacity*, when applied to ſo dull an animal; but I ſpeak comparatively of that unmeaning drowſineſs which is my lot at other times, and *was*, in ſome ſort, while you were here.

MR.

Mr. Dodſley tells me, he received a letter from you, acquainting him that Cleone would be played at Bath: I ſhould be glad to receive from you any particulars of its ſucceſs. He is publiſhing an elegant edition of it, which I expect by this very poſt. The new plate of my grove, which will appear at the end of his Melpomene, is perhaps liable to ſome exceptions, but by much the beſt that has yet appeared: do not forget to ſend me your objections to it. As to the epilogue, I have totally baniſhed, I think, every one of the lines which he *ſubſtituted*; have left to him the choice of two or three readings for the four laſt lines; and though none of them quite pleaſe me, yet the epilogue, on the whole, diſcovers more of genius, is more ſpirited, and leſs inaccurate. I ſhall be glad to find that you think the ſame with me.

In regard to your place, ſo far as I can form an idea of it, I would have you conſult *ſelf*-amuſement; I mean, without too much regard to what *others* ſay or think. As to diſtinguiſhing your ingenuity (which I unfeignedly deſire you may), the preſs affords you more *adequate* materials than either your fortune or perhaps your place. Do not imagine, however, that I ſhall not be much delighted with every ſtroke I trace of yours at Claverton. My faculties are very ſtrongly intuitive in reſpect of every thing belong-

ing to you; and I ſhould be aſhamed if any nook or angel that you had rounded, any wall that you had ruinated, any ſtream that you had diverted, or any ſingle ſhrub that you had planted, ſhould elude my diſcovery: yet you will ſhine *more* by means of the preſs; and if I ſaid any thing concerning your—that did not *encourage* you to perfect it, I am ſure I muſt uſe terms very inexpreſſive of my meaning. Without any more words, let me *intreat* you to proceed with it: give a *full ſcope* to your imagination; and if there ſhould be aught one would wiſh *retrenched*, it is mighty *eaſily done*.

I HAVE indeed *thoughts* (for I *never* uſe the word *reſolutions*) of publiſhing my Elegies next winter—you will gainſay, when I tell you my intention of publiſhing alſo my very Farm; at leaſt, about eight or ten ſcenes taken from it, by way of top and tail-pieces for thoſe Elegies.—The world will perhaps tax my vanity; but I do not in the leaſt care.—The pleaſure which that world gives me, I am very conſcious, will not be too *high*; and I am determined that the pain it may ſeek to give ſhall bear proportion: yet ſhould I be ſorry to obtrude ſtuff upon it, either from the pencil or the pen; and my good friend Mr. Dodſley has ſometimes pained me not a little,

I TELL

I tell you, you *cannot* allow for winter. That very ſcene near Priory-gate ſhews not a bit of road in *ſummer*; though the conſciouſneſs of a firm rail there would add to my own tranquillity.—Mr. Knight has given me Strange's prints, which I hear are fine. Dodſley gives me ſwans: but for theſe two months paſt I have been a librarian, or rather a bookbinder; yet nothing more *unfeignedly*, than your, and Mrs. Graves's, moſt affectionate humble ſervant,

W. SHENSTONE.

XCVII. To the ſame, on Fables, Mottoes, Urns, Inſcriptions, &c.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, Oct. 3, 1759.

DEPEND upon it, I ſhall ſee Claverton before winter.—The miſchief is, that, with as violent a propenſity as ever perſon felt, I ſhall not be able to reach your hemiſphere while Mr. Spence, Mr. Dodſley, and Mr. Whitehead, give it ſuch peculiar luſtre in my eyes. This I did not deſpair of doing at the time Mr. Dodſley left me at Birmingham. It turned upon an event which I did not indeed explain to him, the accommodation of the affair with D—; which concerns near one half of my little fortune, and which, if I have any luck on my ſide,

muſt now be perfected within a fortnight. I was ſhewn the rough ſketch of your *conveyances* laſt Saturday.—Once for all, my [illegible] not in fault; my health and my worldly [illegible] *have* often been ſo, and at preſent [illegible] "Vol me miſerum, "patrone, vocares, [illegible] verum, &c."

Dodsley, to give his book eclat, ſhould allow himſelf time to *correct and poliſh*. It is not enough, in my opinion, merely to [illegible] paſs L'Eſtrange and Croxall. The grand *acquiſite* to Fables conſiſts in giving *ſpeech* to animals, &c. a greater *violation* of *truth* than appears in any other kind of writing! This objection is inſurmountable. Their peculiar *advantage* is to remove the offenſiveneſs of advice; in order to which, one ſhould perhaps purſue a medium betwixt the ſuperfluous garniture of La Fontaine, &c. and the naked ſimplicity and laconiciſm of Phædrus. In reſpect of his own new-invented Fables, I wiſh him to deviſe uncommon ſubjects, and to inculcate refined morals. But pray ſend me *your* two directly, which will anſwer all that I expect in Fables.

Did Mr. Dodſley tell you of the ſeat in my ſhrubbery which I had taken the freedom to inſcribe to you? I could not *ſatisfy* myſelf in an inſcription; and, from a kind of ſpleen and averſion to delay, made uſe of the ſhorteſt that I could deviſe. The ſeat, and ſcroll are elegant. The inſcription, only,

"AMICITIÆ

" AMICITIAE, ET MERITIS
" RICHARDI GRAVES.
"—IPSAE TE, TITYRE, PINVS, IPSI TE FONTES, &c.
" VOCARVNT."

I WILL not be ſo affected as to pretend that the much greater compliment you deſign *me* is more offenſive to my modeſty than it is pleaſing to my friendſhip. I wiſh however it could be a little ſhortened. The " inter hortenſis elegantiæ ſtudioſos" ſeems a little too verboſe for inſcription. Beſide, I had *rather* the compliment were not thrown with ſo much *emphaſis* upon any ſkill I have in gardening; but in ſome ſort *divided* betwixt *that* and *poetry*, if you perceive no great objection; ſuppoſe,

" AMICITIAE G. S.
" QVI,
" NAIADAS PARITER AC MVSAS
" EXCOLENDO,
" SIMVL ET VILLAM EIVS ELEGANTISSIMAM
" NOMENQVE SVVM
" ILLVSTRAVIT."

or,

" ET NOMINI SVO
" NON EXIGVVM DECVS
" ADDIDIT."

or,

" AMICITIAE G. S.
" QVI,

"NAIDAS PARITER AC MVSAS
"FELICITER EXCOLENDO,
"SIMVL ET PATRIAM RVRA
"NOMEN QVE CIVIS
"ILLVSTRAVIT."

or,

"AMICITIAE OPUS.
QVI
"BENIGNAS PARITER EXPERTVS EST
"NAIADAS ET MVSAS."

or,

"CVIVS VOTIS
"FAVERVNT PARITER NAIADESQVE, &c."

A motto,

"(FORTVNATVS ET ILLE, DEOS QVI NOVIT
"AGRESTES)
"PANAQVE, SILVANVMQVE, SENEM, NYMPHASQVE
"SORORES." VIRG.

"Illustravit" seems an happy word here, if it do not savour too much of *nobility*: villa, I presume, implies no more than a country mansion-house.—But I leave the whole to your discretion.

Now you speak of *our* Arcadias, pray, did you ever see a print or drawing of Poussin's Arcadia? The *idea* of it is so very pleasing to me, that I had no peace till I had used the inscription on one side of Miss Dolman's urn, "Et in Arcadia Ego." Mr. Anson

Anſon has the two ſhepherds with the monument and inſcription in alto relievo at Shugborough. Mr. Dodſley will borrow me a drawing of it from Mr. Spence. See it deſcribed, vol. I. page 53. of the Abbé du Bos, "ſur la poëſie et la peinture."

TELL Mr. Dodſley, if he be yet at Bath, that Mr. Cambridge called and dined with me; anſwering preciſely to the idea which I had conceived of him from Mr. D—'s account. I wiſh to God he may have brought you acquainted with Mr. Spence; to whom you are, in my eſtimation, the moſt *like* of any one I know. Is Mr. Spence yet at Bath? Mr. D— is gone, or going. Either he or the former told me that * anecdote of Pope and the Prince of Wales long ago. Pray read Madame De Sevigné's Letters—they have amuſed me much of late. I hope, within a poſt, to ſend you a neat plan of my farm, &c: the ſame to Mr. Spence by your means, if he be at Bath. Do you hear who is to be Biſhop of Worceſter? Give me the earlieſt intelligence you can gather. The late Biſhop viſited me laſt year; and intended, I hear, to have done ſo this. I wiſh we may have another as obliging and polite as I always found his late Lordſhip.

* On the Prince's aſking Pope, how he could be glad to ſee him, when he expreſſed ſo much contempt of Kings; Pope anſwered, "Though he did not like old Lyons, he "loved the young ones before their claws grew."

I WANT

I WANT to inclose ſome little engravings, &c. to you, but muſt wait till I can get a frank. Write *directly*, for this once, I beg you, though you prove dilatory another time. Of all books whatever, read Burke (ſecond edit.) "Of the Sublime and Beauti-"ful;" and of all points whatever, believe that I am, with my beſt good wiſhes to Mrs. Graves, dear Sir, ever your moſt affectionate and invariable friend,

W. SHENSTONE.

"DI MEMORIA NVDRISSI PIV QVE DI SPEME."
How do you like this motto for an urn?

MY beſt compliments to Mr. Spence and Mr. Dodſley, if at Bath. I will write ſoon to each of them. —Your garden is as pretty as you can make it.

XCVIII. To the ſame.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, Oct. 26, 1759.

I WANT no conviction of the pleaſure which you will receive from the termination of my infernal lawſuit. It muſt, if I have *any* luck, be finally adjuſted in about nine days time; after having robbed me of my peace for ſix of the beſt years of my life. During the *former* part of life, I languiſhed for an acquaintance ſomewhat more extenſive: and when the

the company that flocked to see my place removed all grounds of *that* complaint, this accurſed diſpute aroſe, and mixed with every enjoyment that was offered me.—I have ſometimes found entertainment in balancing the good and evil that has been allotted me in general; and have in the end imagined the good prevalent, and that I have great reaſon to be thankful for more happineſs than I deſerve. Yet are there many awkward circumſtances that forbid the *ſcale* to fall *precipitately*; among the chief, I place the diſtance to which I ſee you and one or two others removed. This is indeed an heavy article, and, were it not for letters, would be inſupportable.

As to Mr. Dodſley's collection of Fables, you are miſtaken if you think that I peruſed the quarto book. I dipped into it here and there, and thought there wanted *much* alteration. There was a little book with a paper-cover, on which I beſtowed no ſmall pains; and when I had ſo done, croſſed the Fables which I thought might well enough paſs muſter. Addiſon would have been the beſt writer of Fables of any author I know—the purity of ſtyle—the conciſeneſs—the dry humour—and the familiar manner. As to Dodſley's publiſhing this winter, he may poſſibly do ſo without loſs of credit; but when one conſiders that they are, or ought to be, the ſtandard for years to come, one can hardly avoid wiſhing him to give them the poliſh of another ſummer. 'Twas

fortunate that you pitched upon "The Raven and "Magpie" to transcribe for me; as Mr. Dodsley had sent me "The Sun-flower and the Tuberose" *before*. I think the last somewhat inferior, but will reconsider it before I write again. The Fable which I literally translated from Phædrus was "The Wolf "and the Crane," in order to give Dodsley an idea on *what* Rollin laid the stress in Fables.

As to the inscription, I will endeavour to adjust it to your mind—"Meritisque reconditioribus" may do, but is not explicit enough. I want fully to express a character that shines remarkably among select acquaintance, and yet (through extreme refinement) makes less figure in the public eye.

I HAD made the same objection to Burke's chapter upon *words*—and yet there seems to be something right in it. Du Bos (which I have only seen in *French*, but which I believe is also translated) consists of three volumes, 12mo. His subjects are pleasing, and his knowledge may be entertaining; but his genius seems not very profound, from the little that I have consulted in him.

DONALBY is *precisely* what you say of him; an object of esteem and love, and in some *degree* of admiration. His *ear* does not wholly please me in writing, and yet he is intimately affected with musick

—Lord L—'s ear is perhaps the reverſe. I mean, he does not much regard muſic, yet writes harmoniouſly in verſe and proſe.

ROBERTSON I think to buy—Butler alſo, though I ſhall not admire him—Lord Clarendon, when I am *rich*—Raſſelas has a few refined ſentiments thinly ſcattered, but is upon the whole below Mr. J—. Did I tell you I had a letter from Johnſon, incloſing Vernon's Pariſh-clerk? Pray take Dodſley's advice in regard to your ——; and heighten the ridiculouſneſs of your *hero*, which *his* kind of *lunacy* will countenance, yet admit him to ſay good things: but do not make *any* alteration in the narrative of your own ſtory—at leaſt, till I have again peruſed it. —Do not ſpurn this fifty pounds. It will procure you numerous conveniences, which you would perhaps otherwiſe deny yourſelf.

I HAVE paſſed four or five days, betwixt this week and laſt, at my Lord Ward's at Hinley. This has furniſhed me with franks, beſide the conſolation I derive from *having paid* a viſit of *this kind*. It is "ſpinis è pluribus *una* ſaltem exempta." The *reſtraint* renders them *ſpinæ*. I hope I may ſay ſo without umbrage, or giving an appearance of diſreſpect; for Mr. W— is an agreeable man, and my reception was very polite.

I HAVE

I HAVE three or four more of theſe ſuperb viſits to make, and which I may not omit without giving real offence. To Lord Plymouth, next week; Lord Stamford's, the week after; then to Lord Lyttelton, at our Admiral's; and then to Lord Foley, if your friend Dr. Charleton will accompany me; then, &c. alas! alas! "Quid me exempta juvat ſpina?"—I muſt conclude upon a ſeparate paper. That your *expectation* may not *deceive* you in regard to the plan I promiſed, I incloſe a ſurvey of my farm, reduced to miniature by a neighbouring artiſt. Let me know if it bring the place to your memory. I think to have a plate (which may be done at Birmingham for ſix or eight ſhillings), that ſhall leave me no trouble but to tinge the impreſſions with colours, in order to give my friends. But do you adviſe me to engrave *this*, or another that is twice as large?

I HAVE purchaſed "Gerard upon Taſte," the author of which is a Profeſſor at Edinburgh, and the book commended in the Review—you will ſay that the Reviewers are partial to Scotch-people—I know nothing of that, but the book is learned, and on a pleaſing ſubject—I may perhaps add a very *important* one—for ſurely it is altogether unqueſtionable that taſte *naturally* leads to virtue. I am however in ſome doubt whether it will give you that amuſement which Burke's has done.—I *muſt* now take my leave, having

ing engagements of a different kind; but not till I have deſired my hearty reſpects to Mrs. Graves, and her acceptance of this "Grove and King-fiſher." I am, dear Mr. Graves, ever and moſt entirely, your very affectionate,

W. SHENSTONE.

XCIX. To the ſame, on his Want of Leiſure.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, Nov. 24, 1759.

THOUGH I write to you again ſo ſoon, yet it really grieves me to hear the complaint which you ſo often make for want of time. I, who have time to *waſte* by luſtres, cannot have patience with the world, that ſuffers *you* to want the leiſure which you would employ to ſo much better purpoſes. Perhaps, however, you are as *happy* as more leiſure could *make* you; the caſe is not ſo *clear* as to leave me ſatisfied of the contrary. And yet, as the pleaſures of imagination have an undoubted claim to a real exiſtence, they muſt ſurely afford very *lively* ſenſations to perſons of your ſenſibility and refinement. —Be this as it may, I *will* always *murmur* that you can ſo ill ſpare time for literary amuſement. Nevertheleſs, make *one* effort, and finiſh the taſk you have now before you. I muſt confeſs, you may naturally reply, that I am now become an intereſted perſon; but

but *this*, I am ſure, will be no check to your activity.

Mr. William Duncombe ſent (with the firſt volume of Horace) one of the ſatires in Mſ. *inſcribed to me*. Upon purchaſing, however, the ſecond volume, I find *my* name is changed to "Hawkeſworth."—Who knows but I loſt this compliment by writing to you, my friend, while I ſhould have been writing to him?—if ſo, indeed, you ought to make it up to me; and I am ſure I ſhall prize *your* compliment beyond that of which I have been deprived.

The view of B—, which you mention, I have indeed ſeen a long time ago; but ſurely the *water-fall* is quite deteſtable. There is ſomething on each ſide, as I remember, that puts one in mind of a porridge-pot boiling over beneath the pot-lid. The appearance of the houſe and the back-ground is better; this was adjuſted by the painter, the other (as I think Smith told me) by an old houſe-ſteward of Lord T—'s.

I have incloſed another copy of the lines to Venus, for your emendation.—Thank you for the ſtanza you introduced.—I meant, indeed, *before*, to allude to *natural* beauty more than *moral*; but did not fully enough expreſs myſelf. There remains no tranſition

now

now but from *animal* beauty to *inanimate*; which is eaſier.

You will obſerve, that I take great liberties with the Fables you aſk me to reviſe.—Dodſley muſt think me *very* fantaſtical or *averſe*, while I was correcting thoſe he wrote at The Leaſowes.—I find my *ear* much more apt to take offence than moſt other people's; and, as *his* is far leſs delicate than mine, I muſt of courſe believe, in many places, that I altered merely for alteration's ſake. I cannot be eaſy without ſome certain proportion betwixt one ſentence and another; betwixt one member of a ſentence and another; without a melody at the cloſe of a paragraph almoſt as agreeable as your "magnificent "ſalon."

I HAVE not written to Dodſley any decent letter ſince he arrived at his houſe in London.—I muſt now apply myſelf to write half a ſcore Fables, and, if he chuſes it, a tranſlation of La Motte's Diſcourſe upon the ſubject.—Your reply in regard to the delay of *my* publication cannot be anſwered; that is certain.

WHITFIELD's Journal, I *fear*, is purged of its *moſt* ridiculous paſſages.—Dodſley brought one down hither for Mr. Deane to ſhew my Lord D—th; but

he tells me, there remains nothing of that *groſs* abſurdity which I ſaw in your brother's at Mickleton.

THE painter whom I juſt mentioned to have taken ſome portraits through my recommendation, and to have painted a ruin for my green-room, offers to give me my picture if I chuſe to ſit.—Were you here to lend me your aſſiſtance, I ſhould certainly comply.—Mean while, tell me what you think of ſome of the attitudes that I incloſe. What I myſelf prefer at preſent is, to *leſſen* my *dimenſions* (which of itſelf gives a kind of beauty), and to appear in a kind of night-gown agreeable to the attitude marked AA. The man evidently hits off likeneſſes, and is eſteemed to *ſhine* among the painters of Birmingham. I ſhall be forced to have your picture copied by him, which, by means of dampneſs, flies off the canvas; ſo that, on the whole, I ſhall re-pay his compliment.—This laſt article puts me in mind that I owe you my picture, whenever you demand it; but I would chuſe to defer it till the ſpring, for ſome certain reaſons regarding oeconomy. Remember me *always* to good Mrs. —; and believe me yours, with all poſſible affection,

W. SHENSTONE.

C. To

C. To the ſame, with an Account of a Deſign for his own Picture.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, Jan. 8, 1760.

WERE I to regulate my compliments by the arrival of *times* and ſeaſons, I ſhould congratulate you upon a *correſpondence* which now enters upon its three and twentieth year.—Our *friendſhip* is of ſomething older date; and is not this an *atchievement* that deſerves the honour of a *triumph* both for you and me too?—More, I am ſure, than the regular deſtruction of fifteen or twenty thouſand wretches in the field; conſidering how *uncommon* we find friendſhips of ſo long a duration, and how *cheap* we find ſuch victories, not only on the Pruſſian, but on the Auſtrian ſide.

MR. Cambridge (Scriblerus), who called here this autumn, was conſidering this maſſacre rather in a philoſophical than political view; and, indeed, it does not appear to me that plague, earthquake, or famine, are more pernicious to the human race, than what the world calls Heroes; but enough of this.

YOUR want of leiſure gives me pain; ſurely, if I may gueſs by one or two of your laſt letters, you have enlarged the number of your ſcholars, and extended your domeſtic cares, beyond what your circumſtances *require*.

You muſt not judge of my painter's abilities by the ſmall ſketch I incloſe.—I deſired him to give me a *ſlight* one; and have, perhaps, ruined even *that* by endeavouring to bring it nearer to what the picture now *is*, *myſelf*. It will give you a tolerable idea in moſt points, except the Pan, which has his face turned towards the front; and is not near ſo conſiderable.—I choſe to have this *term* introduced, not only as he carries my favourite reeds, but as he is the principal *ſylvan* deity.—The Water-nymph below has the word "Stour" on the mouth of her urn; which, in ſome ſort, riſes at The Leaſowes. On the ſcroll is, "Flumina amem ſylvaſque inglorius," alluding to them *both*.—The Pan, you will perhaps obſerve, hurts the *ſimplicity* of the picture—not much, as we have managed him; and the intention here is, I think, a balance.

The dog on the other ſide is my faithful Lucy, which you perhaps remember; and who *muſt* be *nearer* the *body* than ſhe perhaps would if we had more room. However, I believe, I ſhall cauſe her head to cut off that little cluſter of angles, where the baludrade joins the baſe of the arch. The baluſtrade is an improvement we made the other day: it is, I think, a great one; not only as it gives a ſymmetry or balance to the curtain of which you complained, but as it extends the *area* on which I

ſtand,

ſtand, and ſhortens the *length* of this *half-arch*. The painter objected to a tree; I know not why; unleſs that we could introduce no *ſtem* without encroaching too much upon the landſcape: but the reaſon he gave was, it would be an injury to the face. The conſole is an Apollo's head. The impoſt does not go further than the pilaſter, which ends the corner; and here the drawing is erroneous. We are, I think, to have a carpet, though we know not well how to manage it.

And now, I muſt tell you the dimenſions. The figure itſelf is three feet, three inches and a half; the whole picture four feet, eleven inches, by three feet, two inches and three-quarters.—The colour of the gown, a ſea-green; waiſtcoat and breeches, buff-colour; ſtockings white, or rather pearl-colour; curtain a terra-ſienna, or very rich reddiſh brown.—I think the whole will have a good effect; but beſeech you to ſend me your opinion *directly*. There are ſome things we can alter; but there are others we muſt not.

You ſhall have one of the ſize you deſire in the ſpring; but will you not calculate for ſome one place in your room? The painter takes very ſtrong likeneſſes; is young; rather daring than delicate in his manner, though he paints well in enamel; good-natured; ſlovenly; would improve much by application. Adieu!

W. S.

CI. To the ſame, on Fable, and other Articles of Taſte and Literature.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, Feb. 9, 1760.

I COULD not underſtand, by Mr. Dodſley's laſt letter to me, that he had any *ſort* of intention to publiſh his Fables this winter. Preſuming upon this delay, and having neither had the *leiſure* nor the *frame* of mind fit to take his preface into conſideration, I have hitherto deferred to do ſo; and can only ſay in *general*, that I could wiſh you had happened to be more copious in your obſervations. La Motte's Diſcourſe on Fables is a moſt excellent performance; containing, as appears to *me*, all that need be ſaid upon the ſubject, and this expreſſed with all imaginable elegance and perſpicuity. I believe I ſhall adviſe our friend D— to make more ample uſe of this diſſertation. There is a tranſlation of La Motte into *proſe*, which is altogether *below contempt*; and yet, for aught I know, the *only* one. The word *naïve* is very probably *that* for which he has ſubſtituted the word *lively*; though by no means of ſimilar import. *Natural* approaches nearer it; but according to La Motte is not preciſe: and, as the words *naif* and *naiveté* ſeem of late to become more in vogue, I will here give you an extract of what he ſays upon the ſubject; "Je ne ſouhaiterois plus rien à l'auteur "de Fables, ſi ce n'eſt d'être fidele au ſentimont, &

" de le peindre toujours avec la *naïveté* qui le ca-
" ractériſe ; car j'oſe encore diſtinguer le *naturel* & le
" *naïf*. Le *naturel* renferme une idée plus vague,
" & il eſt oppoſé en général au *necherché*, au *forcé* ;
" au lieu, que le *naïf* l'eſt particulierement au *réfléchi*,
" & n'appartient qu'au *ſentiment*.

" Le *ſublime*, ſelon cette idée, peut être *naïf*. La
" reponſe du vieil Horace à la queſtion qu'on lui
" fait ſur la conduite de ſon fils ; que voulicz-vous
" qu'il fit contre trois ? *Qu'il mourut.* Cette reponſe
" eſt *naïve* ; parce que c'eſt l'expreſſion toute nuë du
" *ſentiment* de ce Romain ; qui préfére la mort de ſon
" fils à ſa honte. Il ne *répond* pas préciſément à ce
" qu'on lui demande : il dit ſeulement ce qu'il *ſent*.
" Ce n'eſt que dans la vers ſuivant que la *réflexion*
" ſuccéde à la *naïveté* :

" Ou qu'un beau déſeſpoir alors le ſecourut.

" Il *raiſonne* dans ce vers ; il n'a fait que *ſentir* dans
" le premier.

" Les occaſions du *naïf* ſont, peut-être, plus fré-
" quentes dans la Fable ; & l'éloge de La Fountaine
" eſt de n'en avoir gueres manquées ; dans la Fable
" du Pot au Lait, le diſcours qu'il prête à ſa Laitiere
" eſt un chef-d'œuvre de *naïveté*, d'autant plus ſin-
" gulier, que ſous *l'apparence du raiſonnement* le plus
" ſuivi, le *ſentiment* ſe montre dans toute ſa force ;
" ou pour mieux dire, dans toute ſon *yvreſſe*."

And now, let me know what Engliſh word you would employ to interpret *naïf*. *Sentimental* has ſome pretenſions; but is not wholly to one's mind.

I BOUGHT the quarto edition of La Motte's Fables, to which this eſſay is prefixed; though the vaunted cuts which tempted me to this extravagance did not anſwer my expectation. The author, with much addreſs, begs the Duke of Orleans to be at the expence of them; which, to the beſt of my remembrance, was "deux mille ecus."

MR. Hurd, you ſee, is one of Dr. Warburton's Chaplains. I bought his "Dialogues Moral and Po-"litical," almoſt as ſoon they were publiſhed. Sir Edward Lyttelton told me, the introductory one would be omitted in the next edition. The three following are very ingenious; but the two former are a little ambiguous in regard to his intended moral: the two laſt are wholly political, and I have not yet peruſed them, though eſteemed the *beſt*.

HAVE you ſeen Dr. Smith's "Theory of Moral "Sentiments," which is prodigiouſly commended, and which I have bought, but not read?—You will ſee an account of this in the Monthly Review.

I HAVE

I HAVE lately been reading one or two volumes of "The Rambler;" who, excepting againſt ſome few hardneſſes in his manner*, and the want of more examples to enliven, is one of the moſt *nervous*, moſt *perſpicuous*, moſt conciſe, and moſt harmonious proſe-writers I know.—A learned diction improves by time.

I AM ſorry to find no mention of your —— in all the letters which I have received of late. Do not think of *dropping* or even *delaying* the publication of it; only, if you pleaſe, before it goes to the preſs, let me peruſe it once deliberately.—What think you, if Dodſley approve it, of admitting cuts into your ſcheme?

AND now, from *cuts* I proceed to *pictures*. Alcock's portrait of me is in a manner finiſhed; and has been hung up for theſe nine days paſt, in its carved frame, oppoſite to the fire-place in my library. *They ſay* it is a likeneſs, allowing for the diminutive of ſize. Indeed, if I can conclude any thing from the ſtrong reſemblance which he has produced of *others* here, I may form ſome *conjecture* that he has not failed in mine.—Be this as it will; the picture is, upon the whole, a tolerably pleaſing one; and this is

* HE too often makes uſe of the *abſtract* for the *concrete*.

the

the *moſt* I muſt dare to ſay, conſidering my own perſon makes ſo large a part of it.

WHAT think you of a tawney or reddiſh brown for the robe or night-gown, with black for the waiſtcoat and breeches, reſerving green for the curtain? though green is, with me at leaſt, no very gay colour, nor has it that effect which you apprehended in the drapery. Terra-ſienna is a delightful colour; ſo, I think, is Roman ocre burnt. Let me know then, what objections you have to the drapery juſt now propoſed. Let me know alſo any deſign that you think moſt pleaſing for a back-ground; or any ſtory of two or three figures, that would be ſuitable for a relievo.

FROM *pictures* I proceed to *painters*. I believe, Alcock would go and ſettle at Bath, if Amos Green could be induced to join him. Amos Green is the name of the painter whom I recommended to you *before my face*. He is eſteemed inferior to no one *in* England for fruit. He alſo paints flowers, inſects, and dead-game, *very* well. To this he would adjoin the buſineſs of water-painting. Alcock would paint portraits in oil; and to this he would add enamel-painting: both of them the beſt-natured young fellows in the world. Now ſuppoſe them alſo *ingenious*; and tell me whether they would have a chance to *thrive*.

You

You ought to have very conſiderable *amends*, if you are to be plagued with writing and with muſic-matters.—I believe I rate your time and trouble at a much higher price than you do yourſelf.

Dr. Blackſtone has raiſed himſelf to a very eminent figure indeed in the world of letters. I rejoice at it, without one particle of envy, both as he is your friend, and a perſon of merit. I believe no one beſides yourſelf would have dreamt of your old analogy betwixt him and me.—I know not *how* they came to inſert that inſipid Song of mine in the Chronicle.—What ſenſation it cauſed in me, was that of diſapprobation; as it looked like laying ſtreſs on what one knows to be of no importance.

The chief points wherein my picture varies from your drawing is in the corner below the baſe of the pedeſtal; where an antique vaſe is introduced with a flower and two or three leaves of the ſcarlet Geranium. The gilt vaſe agrees well enough with the gold fringe on the edge of the curtain; but the whole is ſo *ſubdued*, as not to catch the eye too ſtrongly. It was chiefly meant to obviate the diſagreeableneſs of the *parallel* lines and angles occaſioned by the ſtep in that corner; but it crowds that ſide a little, if one look from top to bottom; and, though a pleaſing object,

object, it is hard to ſay whether it do more good or harm.

It is time now to take my leave, with my hearty reſpects to Mrs. Graves, and with the uſual aſſurance, that I remain your moſt affectionate and faithful friend,

W. SHENSTONE.

Do write ſoon.

CII. To the ſame, on his neglecting his Correſpondence.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, July 7, 1760.

I MUST confeſs that I do not altogether find your argument concluſive.—An hurry of buſineſs *may* be neceſſary, and ſomewhat inconſiſtent with frequent correſpondence; but a ſtate of *leiſure*, which I wiſhed you, does not imply a courſe of *diſſipation*; which makes your preſent apology for not writing to me before. And ſo, betwixt buſineſs at one time and diſſipation at another, I am to be defrauded of a correſpondence that is quite eſſential to my well-being. Pardon me, if, on ſuch occaſion, you find me extremely clear-ſighted in the foibles of my friends; and do not ſay with the man in Horace, "Cur in "amicorum vitiis, &c." The *matter* is too *important* for me to connive at any ſort of ſophiſm.—However,

to

to make you eaſy on this head, I am convinced the letter was owing to *you*; for which I will draw my apology neither from *buſineſs* nor diſſipation: and yet how juſtly might I palliate my long ſilence upon *either* footing! Since I wrote to you, I have been *buſied* in bringing about a concluſion with D—. The letters, journies, &c. *previous* and *poſterior* to the execution of articles, would afford me noble matter for excuſe.—The conſtant attendance upon workmen (of which I have fourteen or fifteen this very day), making a piece of water below my Priory, would produce more on the ſcore of *diſſipation*—you remember the place. This, at preſent, is my chief employment, although Alcock is drawing on the ſide of my table. —I wonder you do not get ſome little urns turned, in any ſort of wood, about fourteen or fifteen inches high, and painted on the ſide with figures, in the manner of ſome antique baſſo-relievo. He has done ſomething of this ſort for me. You may, if you ſo pleaſe, have the ground a dark *bronze*, and the figures a *light* one. I am of late grown fond of bronze (which you yourſelf may eaſily execute), and I think it always was your taſte—Dodſley comes hither in about a fortnight, and prints *ere* edition of his Fables by means of Baſkerville's preſs and paper. *Mean time*, he is to *give* me his picture done by Reynolds; and to *ſend* me two bronzed plaſter urns, of about twelve inches, with baſſo-relievo; and two figures (ditto) of Homer and Virgil (of about twenty-

one inches) for two niches in my library. The parcel is to be pieced out with Ogilby's Virgil, which I want for the ſake of the landſcapes.—And now to the particulars of your letter.

I CAN readily conceive how much greater pleaſure you muſt receive from the *retinue* of your journey, than an Archbiſhop can from all his equipage; and I can truly aſſure you, I find a pleaſure in every pleaſure you enjoy.

YOUR room, indeed, will be a noble one; but be ſure remember the "Imploravit opes hominis, frænumque recepit," and guard againſt it—to ſpeak my ſentiments, I think you will. I think with you in regard to Triſtram Shandy; ſo does the author of the Monthly Review, you will ſee. I bought Webb inſtantly; but have not read it. Lord Lyttelton is *allowedly* the author of thoſe Dialogues; whoſe the very laſt, I do not know. There is a noble ſpecimen of Scotch poetry tranſlated from the Erſe language—I have had two copies ſent me from Scotland; and, had I two franks, would ſend you one. "Chryſal, or The Adventures of a Guinea" (real characters intended), will amuſe you. Something *ever* occurs that obſtructs my travelling at all—and though I long *ardently* to viſit you, the Lord knows when it will be; yet *be* it certainly will, when I accompany Mr. Knight to Mr. Bamfylde's: where I am preſſingly invited

invited by that gentleman and his neighbours, Lady Egmont, Sir Charles Tynte, &c.—I have about an hundred things more to say; which I muſt defer till I have heard from you.—God bleſs you and yours.

W. SHENSTONE.

CIII. To the ſame, on DODSLEY's Fables, and other Literary Articles.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, Mar. 1, 1761.

ALTHOUGH this interval in our correſpondence muſt be placed, I fear, to *my* account, you will hardly think it mends the matter to *fill* my preſent letter even with the beſt-grounded apologies—I will only mention a bad ſtate of health, which has been my lot this winter, as a general excuſe for two or three months ſilence; and then declare, as with truth I may, that the eſteem and affection which you have ſo well deſerved of me have never undergone the leaſt diminution or abatement. It is with me a melancholy taſk, to *write* letters when I am not well; although it be the time, of all others, when it is moſt neceſſary for me to *receive* them.—Our friend Dodſley, I preſume, has ſent you a book of his Fables before this time. What merit I have there, is in the *Eſſay*; in the *original Fables*, although I can hardly claim a ſingle Fable as my own; and in the *Index*, which I cauſed to be thrown into the form of *Morals*,

and

and which are almoſt wholly mine. I wiſh to God it may ſell; for he has been at great expence about it. The two rivals which he has to dread are, the editions of Richardſon and of Croxall.—The *Fables* in Croxall are tolerably written: his *reflections*, little to the purpoſe, either for boys or grown people.—Richardſon's *Improvement of L'Eſtrange* would be a better collection, both for the *Fables* and the *moral Reflections*, had he not admitted, through an extravagant and miſtaken love of drollery, that vulgarity of phraſe which in many places is not *common Engliſh*.—This I think a true ſtate of the caſe: ſay the beſt you can in behalf of Dodſley.—As to his cuts, though to *him* expenſive, they will hardly, I fear, meet with much of your approbation—the ſcale is much too ſmall—and the emblematic prints which are larger will ſcarce, I fear, be underſtood.—I procured a copy from Baſkerville *before* the plates were *inſerted*, and have cauſed my painter (Alcock) to ſupply the vacancies with ſome devices of my own—ſome account of which I ſend you, as it may amuſe you for a minute. I want one or two to compleat my ſcheme, and ſhould be glad if you would propoſe ſome in your next letter. —I return you my hearty thanks for the hints you gave for the Cambridge verſes; but when I received them it was too late, and I myſelf too much indiſpoſed, either to throw them into proper form, or even to anſwer that gentleman's letter, which I thought a very genteel one.—I know not what he did

on

on that occaſion, having ſeen neither Cambridge nor Oxford verſes—Mr. Dodſley gave me "The Environs of London."—Between friends, I wiſh he may find five thouſand readers, whom the management of that work pleaſes more than *me*.—I will try to get you ſome of the *cuts*, if you deſire me to do ſo, though it will reflect a kind of tacit diſlike of the *whole* performance.—His brother publiſhes this winter "The Works of Soame Jenyns," in three pocket-volumes; and a Chineſe novel from a Mſ. tranſlation, reviſed, &c. by a friend of mine. You have perhaps heard me ſpeak of Mr. Percy—he *was* in treaty with Mr. James Dodſley, for the publication of our beſt old ballads in three volumes.—He has a large folio Mſ. of ballads, which he ſhewed me, and which, with his own natural and acquired talents, would qualify him for the purpoſe as well as any man in England. I propoſed the ſcheme for him *myſelf*, wiſhing to ſee an elegant *edition* and good collection of this kind.—I was alſo to have aſſiſted him in ſelecting and rejecting; and in fixing upon the beſt readings: but my illneſs broke off our correſpondence, the beginning of winter; and I know not what he has done ſince.—There is a New Peerage going to be publiſhed; with, I believe, the draughts of the Peers houſes—Lightholer called here, and ſaid he had taken Lord Lyttelton's, and Lord Stamford's, for that purpoſe; the latter of which he ſhewed me.—Thus I have told you what I hear of new

publications. As to what paſſes in the buſy world, I know no more than the Chronicle informs me—unleſs when *your* letters happen to be *rounded* * with little anecdotes from Bath.—Have you ſeen Baſkerville's new Prayer-books? My Lord Dartmouth has undertaken to preſent two to the King and Princeſs.—Do, for *charity's* ſake, make me ſome amends for the long chaſm in our correſpondence, by a very early and long letter.—I am ſick to hear from you; being, with ardent and ſincere affection, your ever faithful friend and ſervant,

W. SHENSTONE.

CIV. To the ſame, with ſome Political Anecdotes.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, May 2, 1761.

I WILL, upon your laſt aſſurance, take it *ever* for granted, that you do not omit writing upon any ſcore of ceremony. This will render your ſilence, at leaſt in ſome *degree*, leſs irkſome to me; when I do not think it the effect of my own procraſtination.—Mr. Dodſley had ſold two thouſand of his Fables long ago; but complained that he ſhould *loſe* thirty pounds by my neighbour Baſkerville's impreſſion; and that he ſhould not be more than ten pounds gainer

* "Our little life is *rounded* with a ſleep."
SHAKESPEARE.

upon

upon the *whole*. I told him it was enough, in books of *this ſort*, if the firſt edition paved the way for their future eſtabliſhment in ſchools. And ſurely ſo it is: for a book of this kind, once eſtabliſhed, becomes an abſolute eſtate for many years; and brings in at leaſt as certain and as regular returns. I would *adviſe* him to give the polite world one more edition from Baſkerville's preſs; admitting only a *new* ſett of emblematical top and tail-pieces; and confining thoſe empty cuts relating to each Fable to the cheap edition which he prints at London. A ſecond edition of this latter ſort will appear in a little time; and if you have any improvements to propoſe, he will very thankfully receive them. Mr. Spence offers him to write *the life* afreſh; and Spence, Burke, Lowth, and Melmoth, adviſe him to diſcard *Italicks*. I confeſs he has uſed them to a very great *exceſs*, but yet I do not think they ſhould be utterly diſcarded.

I DID not intend that Mr. Davenport ſhould ever hear of thoſe verſes; and how he came to do ſo, is paſt my comprehenſion. He ſeemed to me to have deſerted Worſield, without any intention to return again. I therefore meant to inſcribe them under my own Venus, in order to afford ſome novelty, at an *eaſy rate*, to thoſe who are curious enough to *repeat* their viſits here. Pray, if you ſee Mr. and Mrs. Davenport, preſent my beſt reſpects to them; and as to the verſes, I will ſend you a copy for them, if

you *desire* or *advise* me so to do.—Mr. S— is agreeable, not void of learning, has some smartness, but little taste. Mrs. S— has *much* of the latter; and perhaps imagination, which makes a part of wife, may have had no small share in converting her to Popery.—Mr. Powys I have almost forgot.—You are ingenious and very inventive in regard to the means of giving yourself mortification. I dare to say, your new building suggests no such idea as you conceive; and I think it sufficient in a parsonage-house, if one sees detached specimens of taste or elegance, without uniformity, or even without consistency.

I DO not find but that you *figure* among the gentry near Bath. Dr. Charleton, who was here yesterday with Sir Francis and Mr. Knight, gave me an account that the B— of G— had been to pay his respects to you. I will not enter into particulars, but would wish you to cultivate his acquaintance. I shewed Sir Francis the dead colouring of the picture which I intend to send to you; but you must know that Alcock is the most volatile of all creatures that have not wings: by way of improving the picture I meant for Dodsley, he has made it infinitely less like; and yet it must go to London as *it is*, for God knows when he can be brought to alter it.

I ASKED the Doctor, how Mr. Blackstone came to obtain a seat in Parliament; and his answer was,

"The King inſiſted on it, as he was a man of learn-"ing and ingenuity."—The enmity betwixt Lord L—n and Mr. P—, I find, continues in its full force; inſomuch that my Lord is to have no place while Mr. P— continues in the miniſtry.—My Lord B—'s promotion was, it ſeems, demanded by the D. of N— and Mr. P—, as they would not be expoſed to bear the blame, while he was the chief mover behind the curtain. Theſe little particles of intelligence have, I believe, Sir —— for their author.—I was told by another politician, the ſame day, that we were not to expect a peace; that the French, who might give up the Colonies, would not reſign the Fiſhery.

Mr. Knight, his mother and ſiſter, go through Bath to Mr. Bamfylde's in about three weeks, if nothing intervene. I am teazed greatly to accompany them— by my own *inclination*, I can aſſure you, as well as their *importunity*. I do not ſay I will *not*, nor muſt I ever promiſe you *beforehand* that I *will*. I have good reaſons to the contrary. They have ſome thoughts of bringing Dr. Charleton into the party.

Believe me ever yours and Mrs. Graves's.

W. Shenstone.

CV. To the ſame, on the intended Publication of his Works.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, Sept. 14, 1761.

I OUGHT to have thanked you many weeks ago, for a very *long* and *entertaining* letter; the *length* of which, as well as the *entertainment*, was increaſed by a poſtſcript a few days after.—But as the Winter is with me a dull and uniform ſeaſon, ſo the Summer is a time of univerſal diſſipation; and very happy do I think myſelf, when, after a continual ſucceſſion of company, viſits paid, and excurſions taken, I can ſit down in peace and quietneſs, to attend to the buſineſs of correſpondence and friendſhip. Either reaſon, habit, or complexion tells me, that I am never *otherwiſe* ſo properly employed.

THE laſt digreſſion I made was to the concert at Worceſter, to hear "The Meſſiah" well performed; to meet a number of faces one knows; but firſt, and principally, to viſit your brother, *without* which motive I had not gone. In the two *former* reſpects, the journey anſwered my expectation:—but, alas! your brother was gone into Herefordſhire. I, however, alighted out of the chaiſe; and the houſe-keeper very civilly ſhewed me his delightful parlour, that looks into the meadows, the Prebends' gardens, and down the Severn to Malvern-hills. A more agreeable

town-

town-houſe cannot poſſibly be found any where. But I regretted, when I reached the inn, that I had not aſked to ſee his children; for I either heard them upſtairs, had a glimpſe of them at the window, or fancied, to a degree of conviction, that they were moſt of them within the houſe. I now return to remark upon ſome particulars in your letter—I believe it is that indifference you complain of, which is the *grand* detriment to genius in an advanced part of life. In all *poetical* affairs, we are too apt to cry out with Pallas, "Non eſt mihi tibia tanti;" and this renders all our efforts tame, proſaic, and judicious. But this propenſity, as well as many others, we ſhould guard againſt, upon the approach of age; change the object of our amuſements; cheriſh hopes, well or ill-grounded, of finding that pleaſure in the novelty of objects, which we have not found in any individual. Theſe are the means of *preſerving our vivacity* a ſomewhat longer time than it naturally laſts; but how far it is *prudent* to attach ourſelves to the world that we muſt leave, is a point which *you* better can determine. Refined taſte, as it implies a *love* of phyſical beauty, has this tendency.

THERE is nothing can be more rational than what you ſay about the expediency of *loſing no time*, if I mean to collect and publiſh what I have written. You are indeed very partial to my abilities; but, allowing for *that*, what you mention *coincides* with

what I have thought myſelf, and this for ſome years paſt. A more agreeable kind of *diſtraction* in ſummer, and an indifferent ſtate of health and ſpirits in winter, have hitherto prevented any progreſs in the correction of my pieces. To theſe I might add a *ſubſtence* about the compoſitions, and the manner proper for publication. I am now moſt inclined to make a collection of the whole; I mean, the beſt of what are already printed or in Mſ.; to publiſh them by ſubſcription in a large *quarto* ſize for the ſake of profit; and to apologize for this method, by mentioning the expence of top and tail-pieces, with which I mean they ſhall be embelliſhed. Some of *theſe* (by the bye) may be taken from my farm, the reſt emblematical, in an eaſy and careleſs, but, at the ſame time, elegant manner. I ſhould think the inſtance of Mr. Pope might render this method not diſreputable; and it might be advertiſed (as was done by Mr. Spence), that, unleſs a certain number were ſubſcribed for, the whole affair ſhould be no farther proſecuted. This would put it in the way of many friends to ſerve me, who (I flatter myſelf), *with inclination*, eſteem themſelves void of *opportunity*. Let me beg you to think ſeriouſly of this, as well as of a general title-page, before you write again.

THANK you kindly for all the little diverting anecdotes that are contained in your letter. I am glad to hear your *place* brings you company; partly,

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as it tends to amuſe you; and yet more, as it tends to make your merit more conſpicuous. You and I have led a life of total diſintereſtment. Let me adviſe you to ſeek ſome *advantage* from your commerce with *great men*.—The boy, who was here with you and Mrs. Graves, was here laſt Friday evening with a Mr. Jolliffe and his ſon; the latter of whom obſerved your name upon the bench, and ſeemed proud to declare that he was once your ſchool-fellow. Mr. Stratford (to whom I had written about gold-fiſhes) ſays in his anſwer, "I had the pleaſure from "Bath of waiting upon Mr. G—, and was as much "ſatisfied with the miniature beauties of his place, "as with the polite reception I met with from the "owner." If you have an opportunity, you will oblige me by preſenting my compliments to that gentleman.—I met Dr. Charleton at Worceſter, who ſtands high in my eſteem.—The account of Gothic architecture, &c. is curious; but I have found it in Dr. Warburton's edition of Pope.—I incloſe the verſes on the Venus de Medicis—I told you before my intentions, &c. concerning them; and ſince, I hear that they have appeared in ſome one of the Magazines—through Dodſley's or Percy's means, for I ſurely gave a copy to nobody beſides; and thoſe copies muſt be much imperfect.—My picture ſhall be ſent you as ſoon as I can poſſibly get Alcock over, who has promiſed to come every week for theſe three months paſt. I believe he *will* come ſoon.—I did

not

not know of Mr. Warton's compliment; but he is very obliging to me on all occaſions, and ſends me all that he publiſhes.—I have not yet read Dr. Robinſon's Hiſtory, to my ſhame be it ſpoken, though I have the honour to know the author.—I hope the King *will* oblige the Iriſh Peers with a place in the proceſſion, as that people ſeems greatly out of temper; and, I fear, not without ſome reaſon.

I SEE my friend Dodſley has *let off* his little *ſquib* upon the marriage, in the Chronicle. "*The King "ſought a partner,*" &c. And laſt night was brought me, from Baſkerville's preſs, on the ſame occaſion, very *pompouſly* printed, the moſt deſpicable Grub-ſtreet I ever ſaw.

I HAVE made ſome little improvements about my place; have taken away the wall in front, and made a handſome ring; have extended my path, in one piece of ground, greatly for the better—but the grand water in the valley will make no figure till next ſpring.

I HAVE alſo aſſiſted my friend Hull the comedian in altering the Tragedy of "Roſamond;" had it brought upon the ſtage to a full houſe at Birmingham, where it was very well received; put Hull into a way of making an indirect compliment to the preſent King in the ten laſt lines of his Epilogue, which

was

who followed by "God save great George," &c. in a full chorus of the audience and actors drawn out abreast upon the stage.

SINCE this, there has been deposited in my hands a large collection of Poetry, by a Miss Wheatly of Walsall: many of the pieces written in an excellent and truly classical style; simple, sentimental, harmonious, and more correct than I almost ever saw written by a lady. They will be published, I believe, by subscription, under the patronage of Lord Dartmouth.

BUT nothing in the poetical way has pleased me better than a compliment which I received about nine days ago by the post, under the feigned name *Cotswouldia*.—She must be some Gloucestershire lady that has seen the place; as she raises up a Fairy in my grove, into whose mouth she puts the compliment. It seems written by somebody of fashion by the style. —Can you form any conjecture?

THERE was a Mr. Freeman of Betstow (or some such name) with two or three ladies in a coach and six that were here not long before; a very genteel and polite young man.

I REALLY know not how to stop, when I begin a letter to *you*; and it is one reason why I look upon

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the taſk as too conſiderable to be undertaken at all times. Pray write ſoon, and believe me wholly yours and Mrs. Graves's.

W. SHENSTONE.

CVI. To the ſame, ſuggeſting to him a Subject for Poetry.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, May 20, 1762.

I FIND you will *not* write, unleſs I give a regular anſwer to your letters; and yet, God knows, I have a better excuſe for my delay, than I wiſh my friend to have for his punctilio; I mean, indiſpoſition.—Whence it has happened, I cannot ſay, unleſs I may blame theſe continual eaſt winds; but I have ſuffered more from the ſmiles of Spring, than I have really done from the frowns of Winter.

HAVING premiſed thus much, I lay your letter before me. The expence of printing a ſheet of thoſe commendatory verſes at a common preſs is eighteen ſhillings; and at Baſkerville's about three pounds, ten ſhillings: nor do I mean any decorations, unleſs perhaps "The King-fiſher," or "View of my "Grove," which, you know, I *have* engraven ready to *my* hands. So you ſee that *this* offering to vanity is not likely to be the moſt expenſive.

I WISH

I WISH you had beſtowed ſomewhat more attention upon *the title*; in which caſe, I really believe the job had been executed long ago. Pray be ſo kind as to re-conſider it.—Is not "The Garland of Friendſhip" a little too quaint? for that, as I remember, was what I propoſed.—The *motto* which you propoſed was a very good one; and I think alſo, that the addition of the next line would be an improvement to it; "Et idi errori nomen virtus poſuiſſet honeſtum." But I do not love *double* mottoes; ſo, if I admit this, I muſt exclude what I propoſed; which, to ſpeak the truth, was of my own invention.

THE cuſtom of prefixing commendatory verſes to collections of poetry is now ſeemingly grown obſolete. Beſides, in my caſe, they would only ſhew that I had *taken* up more fame than my funds would anſwer. I return you many thanks for *your* poetical benevolence; but why do you mention it under the name of *Epigram*? I do not even chuſe that it ſhould have the air of *ſimile* from the *beginning*:

"Lo the tall youth, by partial fate's decree,
"To affluence born, and from reſtraint ſet free;
"How pleas'd he, &c."

I HAVE taken *this* and ſome *other* liberties with it, and ſhall inſert it among the reſt; unleſs you chuſe to *redeem* it, with ſomething more to your ſatisfaction:

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for, to ſpeak with frankneſs, I think it better calculated to do *me* honour than *yourſelf*; though I could eſteem it *good*, if it came from a perſon whoſe abilities I reſpected leſs than yours. There is a ſubject here, which I would recommend to you, if by ſo doing I ſhould lay you under no *reſtraint*. It is my principal caſcade. Its appearance well reſembles the playfulneſs of infancy; ſkipping from ſide to ſide, with a thouſand antic motions, that anſwer no other purpoſe than the mere amuſement of the proprietor. —Other ſimilitudes, &c. would here occur;

"Cui enim naſcenti faciles arriſerunt Muſæ, &c."

It then proceeds a few hundred yards, where it *rolls* and *ſlits iron* for manufactures of all kinds; reſembling the graver toils of manhood, either in acquiring money, or furniſhing the conveniencies, comforts, or ornaments of life: and in this manner it proceeds, under the name of The Stour, ſupplying works for caſting, forging and ſhaping iron, for every civil or military purpoſe. Perhaps you may not know that my rills are the principal ſources of this river; or that this river ſupplies *more* iron-works than almoſt any ſingle river in the kingdom: for ſo my friend Mr. Knight told me.'

THE Mr. D— you enquire after, and who wrote the *beſt* addreſs Sir Robert Walpole ever *received*, is Mr. Dodington.—Did I never ſend you a liſt of all the

the concealed names in that Miſcellany?—I began to tranſcribe one from my own ſet; but find one part of my liſt is loſt; I however ſend it, and will piece it out when I find an opportunity; as I purpoſe alſo to give you ſome account of our ſeveral merits in Dodſley's Fables. By the way, do not the verſes to Dr. Cornwallis (now Biſhop) affect you ſenſibly, vol. VI. p. 138?—they do *me*, whenever I read them; and I cannot help applying them to myſelf. I feel ſomewhat of the ſame ſenſation when I read "The "Letters of Henry and Frances;" in which (from ſelf-partiality, no doubt) I find myſelf extremely like Henry.

PRAY let me hear, if you pleaſe, of Mr. Davenport.—I wiſh I had learnt to *draw* well in early life: it would have given me ſome very great advantages.—Let me hear alſo much of Mr. Melmoth, who, I preſume, has left you long before this time. I did once deſign to have ſent you down my propoſals for a ſubſcription, and requeſted the favour of *you two* to ſettle them finally, without any further reference to myſelf; but my head and ſpirits have been too bad to undertake even a common letter.—What think you of Dr. Lowth's Grammar?—Livie met him at Mr. Dodſley's; and ſays, he is well pleaſed with *our* frontiſpiece, &c. to Horace. Livie could not preſent his book to Lord Bute, *himſelf*, on account of my Lord's indiſpoſition. Mr. Dalton (Dr. Dalton's brother),

ther), who teaches the King to draw, presented it. It ſeems, this Dr. Dalton (who gave the drawing of Lord Bute's arms) has lodgings in the palace, and ſees the King every day. *While* Livie was with him, word came that the King was coming into his room; upon which, Livie was ſent out another way. —The King aſked Dalton, whom he had with him? —and was anſwered, an editor of Horace, who had inſcribed it to Lord Bute.—Dalton is to preſent a copy to the King.

I INCLOSE to you a ſpecimen of the decorated parts of Horace, with the frontiſpiece.—The book will be publiſhed in a month's time, when I mean you a copy from thoſe that are allotted to me.

My Lord Bute's arms are unexceptionably well-finiſhed.—The other plates, either through negligence, or the wilfulneſs of the deſigner and engraver, have given me infinite trouble and vexation. However, with about *two-thirds* of my directions obſerved, they will, I hope, afford you ſome pleaſure; and diſcover ſomewhat more *beauty* and *ſpirit* than one commonly finds in ſuch deſigns.—Send me your remarks very particularly, I beſeech you.

W. S.

CVII. To

CVII. To the ſame.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Graves, Nov. 20, 1762.

DO I really owe you an apology? you who are embarraſſed with ſuch a number of momentous concerns, as hardly allow a fair trial to letters of mere amuſement? Alas! I cannot ſhelter my long ſilence under a ſuppoſition of this kind. I believe, I even *hope*, that you have diſapproved my long neglect; as I can very faithfully aſſure you I have repeatedly done *myſelf*. There are certain times and ſeaſons when I have not either the *power* or the *will* to write: as Hannibal ſaid about attacking Rome, "quandoque mentem non dari, quandoque poteſtatem." This being an intellectual kind of *lethargy*, it would have been at leaſt a friendly office, if you had *rouzed* me, as you *might* have done, by a ſupernumerary letter. I never receive a line from you, but I feel an almoſt irreſiſtible propenſity to anſwer it that very inſtant. Impediments ſometimes occur; and, that inſtant being neglected, matter is accumulated for a longer letter than I am always reſolute enough to undertake: at the ſame time, I can never content myſelf with uttering one half of what I have to ſay.—Pray is not that *good ſort of man*, to whom you allude, a Mr. K—? Let him be ever ſo good a ſort of man in the common eſtimation, I dare aver him to be neither an ingenious perſon nor a candid

critic. There may be fifty or more preferable reading to what are received in this new Horace; yet he will find a better *text* there, *upon the whole*, than in any one edition before extant. As to the *beauty* of *type* and *preſs-work*, it is too obvious to need vindication. The accuracy of the *latter* almoſt exceeds what was ever found in any other book. Then as to the *frontiſpiece*, it is, I think, much ſuperior to ſuch as *ordinarily* occur; the *ſubject* animated, and well-choſen; and the *execution* very commendable: at leaſt, if we allow for the *nice* touches which it required, and the *uncommon difficulty* of getting any thing of this kind done to one's direction.

Mr. Walpole is a lively and ingenious writer; not always accurate in his determinations, and much leſs ſo in his language; too often led away by a deſire of routing prejudices and deſtroying giants: and yet there is no province wherein he appears to more advantage, in *general*, than in throwing new light upon Characters in Britiſh Hiſtory. I wiſh he would compoſe a regular work, making this his principal point. He has, with great labour, in his Book of Painters, recorded matters of little importance, relative to people that were of leſs. I have a right to be ſevere, for his volumes coſt me above thirty ſhillings; yet, where he drops the *antiquarian* in them, his remarks are ſtriking, and worth peruſal.—I have ſent for "Geſner's Rural Poems," and intend to ſee

"The

"The Death of Abel;" though I expect to find ſmall pleaſure in this *poetical proſe*, unleſs exquiſitely well-tuned.—Thank you for the anecdote of Lord Courteney: a thouſand ſuch ſort of things, that engage the public attention, are never capable of penetrating the depth of my retirement.

Mr. Melmoth you will probably ſee often, as he intends to make Bath his place of reſidence. The *Omphale* you ſent me is a moſt excellent figure, and I ſhall wiſh much to get a good caſt of it; at leaſt, when I am able to afford it.—When I write again, I will give you the beſt account I can of *my ſhare* in Dodſley's new Fables; though it will be no eaſy matter to ſpeak *ſeparately* of it with any preciſion.

And now, I think I have ſpoke to moſt of the articles in your laſt letter.—Mr. Dodſley, who ſays he viſited you, would acquaint you how we divided our time whilſt he was here, into two *principal* parts, "l'un à dormir, l'autre à ne rien faire." Yet we paid our devoirs to a good deal of genteel company; of which this ſeaſon has afforded me at *leaſt* an equal ſhare with any that went before. I will particularize a few; opening the liſt with no leſs perſonages than the Duke and Dutcheſs of Richmond—Mr. Walſh, Member for Worceſter—Earl of Bath with Dr. Monſon, Mrs. Mountague (who wrote the three laſt Dialogues printed with Lord Lyttelton's), and other com-

pany, from Hagley—Sir Richard Aſhley—Mr. Mordaunt—Dr. Charlton with Mr. Knight—Earl and Counteſs of Northampton—Mr. Amyand—Lord Plymouth and Sir Harry Parker—Mr. and Mrs. Morrice of Perceſield—Lord Mansfield with Mr. Baron Smythe, Lord Dartmouth and Mr. Talbot—Marquis of Taviſtock and Earl of Oſſory—your nephew Mr. Graves, with Mr. Hopton and one of the ſenior Proctors of Oxford—Lord and Lady Dacre—Baron Pleſſen, Gentleman of the Bed-chamber to the King of Denmark, with a Mr. Wendt his Tutor—Lord and Lady Vernon of Sudbury with his children, Sir Charles and Lady Tynte, and Mr. Garrick's brother—Mr. Melmoth and Mrs. Melmoth—Colonel James—Lady Ward and Lady Uill, with Miſs Wrotteſley, Miſs Pigott, &c.—Lord Lyttelton, Mr. Lyttelton, and Mr. Ruſt—Lord and Lady Dartmouth with Lord and Lady Willoughby de Broke—Mr. Anſon of Shuckburgh with Mr. Stuart the painter and publiſher of "Athenian Ruins"—Mr. Pepys and Sir W. Wheeler's ſon, Mr. Pitt's nephew, &c.—Colonel Bamfylde with Mr. Knight's Family, &c. &c.—I did not imagine my liſt would have engroſſed ſo much of my paper, and leave ſo little room to ſpeak about the individuals.—Lord M— appeared to me rather a *man of wit* than a *man of taſte*; Baron Smythe, the reverſe.—Mr. and Mrs. Morrice, extremely polite and agreeable people, invited me preſſingly to their habitation; I could not help reflecting on the ſingular happineſs

pineſs of Mr. Morrice, to be poſſeſſed at once of a large fortune, one of the fineſt ſituations in England, and a wife whoſe taſte for rural improvements appears even ſuperior to his own; at leaſt, if the *beauty* of her *perſon* did not impoſe upon my judgement. There are many others whom I would diſtinguiſh, if my time or paper would permit.—I ſuppoſe that you and Mr. Dodſley would be mighty unanimous with regard to the propriety of ſetting my ſubſcription on foot. I do not diſpute any of your arguments—they tally exactly with my own opinion: at leaſt, allowing for the higher idea you have of my pieces than they deſerve—the truth is, that I have deferred the publication too long *already*—till many of the compoſitions will not appear to the ſame advantage as before, and till I have not half the power that I had formerly to improve them. When I am low-ſpirited, I almoſt ſhudder at this tremendous contract with the publick; when my ſpirits are elevated, I ſee the neceſſity that you do, of not loſing a moment's time—were you here a week, you would put the matter upon a footing that was unalterable—would to God you *were* here, or any one *like* you! however, it is probable you will *ſoon* hear from me again upon this very ſubject—I *know* this, that, *if* I print at *all*, the ſubſcription is by no means to be neglected this preſent winter.—I have ſeen our friend Dr. Charleton many times this ſeaſon; at The Leaſowes; at Mr. Knight's; at his own houſe; and at my Lord Foley's.

This visit to my Lord Foley's was performed about three weeks ago. I went with young Knight; and the company of the Doctor and Sir Francis Charleton took off all restraint, and made the visit perfectly agreeable. My Lord's behaviour was entirely free and hospitable; and his conversation lively and entertaining—I must confess, far beyond the idea which I have been taught to conceive of him. His table the most magnificent, I believe, of any Nobleman's for thirty miles round. His park, and Woobery-hill adjacent, afford views that are either extensive, wild, beautiful, or grand. The portico before his lodge deserves particular notice. His house large, and commodious, and well furnished; but scarce any of the rooms *high* enough to stand the test of modern criticism. But what strikes more than all the rest, is the magnificence of his chapel—which however I cannot stay to describe; for I this very *moment* receive your letter.—After having written so much before, I can only touch upon some few particulars.—I believe, my scheme of publication will proceed in a little time, and that you will soon hear from me again.—If you can possibly excuse me to Mr. Davenport, and keep me well with him for a week or fortnight, I will not fail to write him a respectful letter.—I am truly ashamed of my neglect; but have written more letters within this week than I have done for a quarter of a year before.—That there is a faction forming against Lord B—, I readily believe. The war may

ſuit the *mercantile* world; and the City of London has generally the art to repreſent the *landed* and *trading* intereſt as *preciſely* the ſame thing: but I think there is a very material difference; which it would be no way difficult to demonſtrate—at leaſt I am one that cry out,

"Nulla ſalus bello; pacem te poſcimus omnes!"

I am quite unacquainted with the affair relating to Colonel Wilkes and Lord Bute's ſon.—And now (though I mean to write again ſoon) I will releaſe you from this unpleaſing ſcrawl. I beg however that you would not fail to write to me *directly*, if you can find leiſure; being quite impatient to converſe with you, after ſuch a chaſm in our correſpondence; and being, with unvariable affection, my dear friend, for ever yours.—Pray my beſt reſpects to Mrs. Graves.

W. SHENSTONE.

MY friend Dr. Grainger has written a Poem, in blank verſe, which he calls "The Sugar-Cane."—It is divided into four books, and is capable of being *rendered* a good Poem. My friend Jago has written another Poem, in blank verſe alſo, which he calls "Edge-hill." It is deſcriptive chiefly of the proſpect—but admits an account of *the fight* there, and many little *tales* and *epiſodes*; with compliments alſo to the gentry of Warwickſhire.—It lies now upon my table.

CVIII. To Mr. Jago.

My dear friend, 1762.

A THOUSAND thanks to you for the very obliging and humorous Poem which you are ſo kind to ſend me. I really think it very ingenious, and, upon the whole, extremely correct; although I have taken the liberty of propoſing one or two hints for farther improvement. The relation that it bears to me and my place *may* tend to prejudice my *judgement*; but I cannot conceive that it requires aught beſide *impartiality*, to reliſh the beauties of this Poem. I beg I may receive a fair copy in your own hand, as ſoon as poſſible; and I will conſider, in the mean time, how to ſhew it to the publick in the moſt advantageous manner. It certainly does me *honour*: as things are at preſent circumſtanced, it may *tend* to do me *good*; which I am very ſure you would be glad to ſee. I am a little aſhamed to be ſo much behind-hand with you, in favours of *this* and *other* kinds: but I live in hopes there may come a day, when I ſhall find occaſion to expreſs my gratitude. The pictures you ſent arrived ſafe on Thurſday: and have been ſince cleaned, and put up in their places. I cannot enter upon this ſubject now; finding it almoſt ſix o'clock at night, and having juſt received a letter from Mr. Dodſley which he requires me to anſwer by return of poſt. It relates to the *ſcheme* mentioned in his laſt, which is intended for my emolument;

ment; but which I muſt not expect to ſucceed, without conſiderable mortification. This *inter nos.*—You muſt by no means lay aſide the thoughts of perfecting *Edge-hill*, at your leiſure. It is poſſible that, in order to keep clear of flattery, I have ſaid leſs in its favour than I really *ought*—but I never conſidered it otherwiſe than as a Poem which it was very adviſeable for you to compleat and *finiſh*. I am now to deſire my beſt reſpects to Mrs. Jago, and to bid you an affectionate adieu:

"Tu comes antiquus! tu primis junctus ab annis!"

I AM, my dear friend! ever yours, with the trueſt eſteem,

Dec. 18, 1762. W. SHENSTONE.

CIX. To SHERRINGTON DAVENPORT, Eſq;

The Leaſowes,

Dear Sir, Jan. 4, 1763.

MR. G— tells me, that you have done me the honour to lay ſome ſtreſs upon receiving a letter from me. Alas! it muſt be owing purely to your benevolence, which makes you wiſh to hear of an abſent friend, and not to any expectations you can reaſonably form of entertainment from his pen. The long letter with which you favoured me was ſo very lively as well as ingenious, that I deſpaired of drawing

ing from my fountains the vivacity you do from the Bath waters. But, be this as it will, the vein of friendſhip that runs through your letter demands my ampleſt acknowledgements; and if you will accept of *ſuch* returns, I promiſe they will be as *hearty* as they are *inſipid*.

I AGREE with you, that the firſt ſallies of imagination will generally prove the moſt ſprightly, and that they will often comprehend the principal features of a ſubject. They are of the nature of dead-colouring in a portrait; which one ſometimes thinks more ſpirited than the ſame performance when finiſhed. And yet a *good* painter will not *hurt* a portrait by the ſubſequent labour he beſtows upon it, nor will a *good* writer injure his piece by the pains he takes to round and perfect it. It muſt be ſome defect in the taſte of either that makes his diligence detrimental, or gives occaſion for a ſtander-by to cry out, "Manum de tabula." I believe it will appear upon examination, that works which coſt moſt labour have generally been thought the *eaſieſt* and pleaſed the *longeſt*. One cannot, however, deny that there is a ſort of perſons formed by nature for *ſhooting-flying* (which, by the way, I could never *do*), and that their ſallies of imagination are what they can hardly improve by any future pains. Theſe may be called men of wit and fire, but it is the union of *taſte* with theſe that conſtitutes fine writing. True taſte will never

never ſtiffen or over-charge any performance: it will rather be employed to ſmooth, ſimplify, and give that eaſe on which *grace* depends. One can as little deny that there are *kinds* of writing which have a better chance than others to ſucceed without much labour, which ſtart forth mature at *firſt*, as Pallas did from the brain of Jupiter. Works of *humour* are often of this ſort; and there are many inſtances in Butler's Hudibras. Yet I think the humour of *Swift* was greatly owing to a judicious *reviſal*.—Pardon me, my dear friend, for this tedious diſcuſſion, which you little thought of bringing upon yourſelf by the obliging hint you gave concerning thoſe verſes upon Venus. I do acknowledge that an additional ſtanza there, containing a reflexion on Chineſe architecture, were better laid aſide. It ſeemed to me one of the "ſplendida peccata," that might be a little *popular* at this *time*; and has, therefore, for this ſeaſon, appeared on a board by the ſide of the Venus. We, who cannot erect freſh temples, or even add a new garden-ſeat every ſpring, are obliged to make the moſt we can of a new and tolerable copy of verſes, that coſts us *thought* inſtead of *money*; and even at a pinch to piece out a dull ſcene with duller poetry: how elſe could I keep my place in countenance, ſo near the pompous piles of Hagley? And yet there are few *faſhionable* viſitants that do not ſhew an *affection* for the little Amoret, as much as they admire the ſtately Sacharilſa—"plerumque gratæ divitibus vices."

"*vices.*" I have often conſidered why thoſe poſſeſſed of palaces yet eſteem a root-houſe or a cottage as a deſireable object in their gardens.—Is it not from having experienced the imperfection of happineſs in higher life, that they are led to *conceive* it more compleat beneath a roof of ſtraw; where, perhaps, it may really be as defective as in the apartments of a King or a Miniſter?—A thouſand thanks to you and Mrs. Davenport for the accommodations you ſo kindly offer me. Experience will no more ſuffer me to queſtion the *cordiality* than the politeneſs of your reception. What an amuſing picture have you given of Bath! pleaſures carried to the utmoſt height, and opiates ready when one is cloyed with pleaſures! And yet let me confeſs a truth, you have *lightly* touched upon thoſe *very* articles which would prove to me the moſt *ſpecifically* pleaſing. For can any temptation be ſtronger, than to ſay that *you* reſide there? and does not my friend G — reſide at Claverton, of whoſe genius and friendſhip I have had proofs theſe twenty years paſt? and have you not Mr. Webb, and now Mr. Melmoth, to make Bath *enviable* for the reſidence of literature? What a joy would it afford me to go on a party with you to Perceſield, whither Mr. and Mrs. Morrice gave me the moſt preſſing invitations!—Theſe ſurely are pleaſures of which—I *hope* one day to partake.

My health, generally bad in winter and ſpring, has hitherto been tolerable. The *influenza* of laſt ſpring continued to depreſs me half the ſummer. Would you think the verſes I incloſed were written on that occaſion by a young journeyman ſhoe-maker; and one that lives at the village of Rowley, near me? He conſidered my diſorder in ſomewhat too *grave* a light, as I did not think my life endangered by it; but, allowing for this, and the *partiality* he ſhews *me*, you will think the lines pretty extraordinary for one of *his occupation*. They are not, however, the *only*, or, perhaps, the *chief* ſpecimens of his genius; and yet, before he came to me, his principal knowledge was drawn from *Magazines*. For theſe two or three years paſt, I have lent him Claſſics, and other books in Engliſh. You ſee, to *him*, I am a great Mæcenas; although you and my friend expect me to become an author by ſubſcription. On this head I will ſay no more at *preſent*, than that I am infinitely obliged by your extreme friendly offers. My friend G—, who knows my ſentiments, has ſometimes the honour of waiting upon you; I ought not, therefore, after this tedious epiſtle, to begin to trouble you with a written explanation of them. Believe me, dear Sir, with my moſt reſpectful compliments to Mrs. Davenport,

Your ever obliged
and moſt obedient ſervant,
W. SHENSTONE.

I WILL

I WILL ſend you ſome other of Woodhouſe's verſes, when I can get him to tranſcribe them.

CX. To Mr. JAGO.

The Leaſowes,
Dear Mr. Jago, Jan. 4, 1763.

MY laſt letter muſt have been confuſed, and the arrival of it, I fear, uncertain.

THE hare and birds, in one of the pictures which you ſent me, I think, are well; the other parts of it indifferent; the greyhound worſt of all. The portrait is by no means equal to its companion, either in beauty of the perſon, or ſkill of the painter; yet it matches ſo well with the other, that I find my parlour very much embelliſhed by it. Pardon the freedom with which I criticiſe your preſent; and accept once more my very thankful acknowledgements.

I AM truly glad to find ſo worthy a Nobleman, and ſo warm a friend of yours, as my Lord Willoughby is, made a Lord of the bed-chamber.

I HAVE heard nothing ſince I wrote laſt in regard to *my* affair; though I expect to do ſo every day. I have ſuch a tribe of humours and peculiarities, that it

it is easier to make me sick than to make me happy; and ten to one that the favour will not be conferred without disgusting some of these said humours, &c. However, one must make the best of it; and reflect, that mortifications in one place may preclude mortifications in another.

I go to-morrow, by appointment, to Enville; where I may probably stay till Saturday. I have wished most heartily for a copy of your Fable to take with me; but Dodsley has not yet returned that I sent him. Pray consider my proposed alterations rather as hints than real improvements, and let me have a copy as soon you can. I wrote my criticism over twice, and know not whether I sent the best or the worst copy; so I send the other, though perhaps much the same. I forgot to particularize many shining parts in your little Fable, that are either elegant or humourous: of the former sort, nothing could be happier than what you say about H—; as it touches, in the *gentlest* manner, on a possible truth, which, if expressed rather than implied, might not be altogether inoffensive. This beauty is produced by substituting H— instead of L—, the place instead of the proprietor.

I have lately read "The Death of Abel." It is not void of merit; but might have been made much more pathetic by a more simple and prosaic style.

I desire

I DESIRE my beſt reſpects to Mrs. Jago and your family.—May not I ſee you here this Chriſtmas? as I wiſh to do, becauſe it is the ſeaſon preſent; and not that I am not at all times and at all ſeaſons moſt unfeignedly glad to wait upon you, and moſt affectionately your ever faithful ſervant:

"Tecum etenim longos memini conſumere ſoles,
"Et tecum primas epulis decerpere noctes.
"Unum opus, & requiem pariter diſponimus amabo, &c."

Your kind remembrance of me in your Edge-hill has brought theſe quotations into my head. Adieu!

W. SHENSTONE.

CXI. To the ſame.

My good friend, Jan. 11, 1763.

I AM ſuſpicious that my letters (of which I have ſent two) do not reach you by the way of Warwick. This is meant as an experiment whether they will arrive by way of Southam. It is meant withall to remind you of perfecting your little Fable, and diſpatching it to me as ſoon as may be. I would fain tranſmit a copy to Lord S—'s, before the

the family ſeparates, or leaves Enville; by whom, I am ſure, it would be admired.

I AM juſt returned from a viſit which I made there, of four or five days paſſed very happily. At coming away, I ſhewed my Lord two or three of Mr. D—'s laſt letters, which laid open to him the ſcheme that was carrying on for me. I requeſted alſo, if there ſhould be occaſion (which there poſſibly might *not*) that he would allow me the honour of being known to him. He ſaid, "he was glad to find what "was going forward; and had long wiſhed to ſee "ſomething of that ſort begun before: that he "ſhould be in town, I think, in February; and "would do me any ſervice in his power. He de"ſired me alſo to acquaint Mr. D— (in alluſion "to the latter's uncertainty about my Lord's politi"cal connexions) that he thought it the duty of "every honeſt man to ſupport the preſent Govern"ment; and that he ſhould continue his regard for "the Miniſter, ſo long as he ſaw nothing in his mea"ſures that was prejudicial to his Country."

I KNOW that you will take a friendly part in any good that may befall me. Pray write, be it ever ſo careleſsly; and believe me ever yours and Mrs. Jago's moſt affectionate and faithful

W. S.

"The writer ſurvived the date of this letter but a ſhort "time, his death happening on the eleventh of the follow-

" ing month, to the inexpreſſible grief of his [illegible]
" mate friends, and the generous concern [illegible]
" too late acquainted with his merit, were in [illegible]
" ſolves in the pleaſing thought of having [illegible]
" future eaſe, and tranquil enjoyment of life."

CON-

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